

**The Academy of Religion
and Psychical Research**

1989 Annual Conference

PROCEEDINGS

**KUNDALINI
AND THE
PARANORMAL**

**The Academy of Religion and Psychical Research
P. O. Box 614 • Bloomfield, Connecticut 06002**

THE ACADEMY OF RELIGION AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

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KUNDALINI AND THE PARANORMAL

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

ACADEMY OF RELIGION AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Boyce Batey
Executive Secretary

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FOREWORD

This Foreword consists of five parts: I. Some summary comments concerning the two successive ARPR conferences on kundalini; II. Observations concerning the academic status of the papers from the two conferences; III. A taking note of some of the things that members of ARPR and other participants in the two conferences can have learned from the two years of emphasis on kundalini; IV: Suggested projects of future work on the nature of kundalini and its possible roles not only in Hinduism or Buddhism, but in all the spiritual traditions and commitments of the world; V. The fundamental importance of the role of the individual in the future study of kundalini and the future of ARPR.

I. For the past fourteen years The Academy of Religion and Psychical Research has sponsored an annual conference, emphasizing at least one or two topics of special interest to those who study the relations between the paranormal and religious experience and commitment. In 1988 and 1989 both ARPR conferences pertained to Kundalini, while all of the 25 papers given at the two conferences were among those sent in response to a nationally announced "call for papers."

In all cases these papers express what the authors accept as their personal experience with kundalini and/or their own critical evaluation and interpretation of kundalini. Most, or perhaps all, of the speakers emphasized the importance of kundalini to them personally or to their professional activities as counselors and therapists or to both of these. In any event, the views expressed in each of these 25 papers are those of the author and do not represent official positions, interpretations, or evaluations on the part of the Board of ARPR or the membership of ARPR.

Further, in the interests of promulgating understanding of ARPR, it is important to draw attention to the fact that the Academy of Religion and Psychical Research is an academic organization committed to no one emphasis on, or evaluation of, the many topics which fall within its purview. It welcomes as members those with highly specialized interests in particular areas of the roles of the paranormal in religion, as well as those with very broad or multiple interests. Certainly it is and, in my opinion, must remain truly ecumenical in the sense that it also welcomes as members those of all spiritual paths. And ideally there will always be among its active members those interested in various ways of synthesizing the many interests which have flourished and, it is to be hoped, will continue to flourish within the Academy.

II. There are some features of these essays which have already been the subject of comments on the part of members and observers of ARPR, and these features will repay some attention here. Thus, not only the emphases on the many aspects of kundalini, but also the interpretations of the nature and roles of kundalini differ from author to author.

Significantly, this diversity is very seldom commented on by the authors themselves. Most of the papers represent primarily the point of view from which kundalini is known by their authors. I suggest that in the interest in integrity and faithfulness to the facts which should guide future work on kundalini and also in the spirit of due appreciation of these papers there are four aspects of these 25 papers which are noteworthy.

(1) For ARPR, as academic community the members of which meet once a year for joint consideration of important topics related to religion and psychic research, most of these papers served to draw our attention to certain Hindu or Buddhist teachings concerning kundalini. And one important role of these papers is that they could be interpreted as our opportunity to learn how some individuals, who believed they had encountered kundalini either in their own lives or through observation of kundalinic activity in the lives of others, report their convictions and insights. There was no initial attempt to compare and contrast their views concerning kundalini; to synthesize these views; or to reject or curtail any of them.

(2) The diversities among these 25 statements, and including what look like the occasional contradictions among them, are to be expected. For if kundalini has the universally important significance that is claimed for it, then it should occasion no surprise that experience with it is expressed in numerous ways, depending in large part on the interests, life-experiences, cultural differences, and spiritual/intellectual states of the individuals who become acquainted with it. The effects of these many variables on specific occurrences of kundalini could become the subject of a more advanced inquiry into the nature of kundalini.

(3) The claims of the universal significance of kundalini also suggest that in different spiritual traditions the appearance of kundalini would take different forms. And the claims suggest that, if we begin with the working hypothesis that kundalinic phenomena are always the same entity, or process, or one facet of the human being, it will be fruitful to study kundalini "holistically"--i.e., in terms of the views of man and reality within which it is fostered. It is a noteworthy consideration that kundalini associated with, or nurtured by Taoist, Hindu, Kabbalistic Jewish, or orthodox Christian teachings would perhaps reveal different aspects of its own nature and have a variety of effects and roles.

(4) Given the fact that the knowledge of kundalini comes from cultures which are not shaped or dominated by Western science, diversity among accounts of occurrences of kundalini is to be expected. In learning about kundalini we are dealing with the teachings of individual spiritual leaders who have passed on their insights and advice to particular students by personal spiritual direction and by work of mouth. Further, it is very important that in emphasizing this fact we refrain from making negative value

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judgments concerning the yogic disciplines as source of reliable conclusions about man and reality as opposed to those deriving from Western scientific method. The Yogic disciplines and modes of inquiry differ from each other--Taoist yoga is not Hindu yoga and both differ from any legitimate understanding of the "yoga of the West", which, whatever this last might be, certainly is not drug-related (as Timothy Leary once suggested) and probably has some roots in Platonism. But all modes of inquiry accompanying or arising from yoga disciplines differ from Western science: they are different kinds of methodological procedures; they were developed to serve different needs and answer different questions; and they have different roles in the lives of the individuals who appropriate them and in the cultures which have fostered them.

One aspect of all the yogic disciplines, which may give some Western investigators pause when they consider the possibility of the inquiry into kundalini, is that the yogic disciplines have intentionally probed more deeply into reality than Western science has ever been intended to do. We do not at present have genuinely illuminating words to expound this fact. But these all-important features of the yogic disciplines may be delineated by pointing out that each in its own way produces what it offers as reliable insight into reality which is far more akin to the Western traditional conception of metaphysics than it is to the conclusions of any one of the Western modern sciences. This is an extremely complex and controversial area which must be kept in mind when we try to work out what we consider to be a scientific study of at least some aspects of kundalini. For conclusions pertaining to kundalini are couched in language, and based on articulations of experience, that only the spiritually prepared can understand. And, that these conclusions do not immediately fit easily into our present scientific expectations is not properly seen as denigration of the first hand knowledge of kundalini which occurs within the Hindu or Buddhist traditions.

III. It follows from the foregoing that important epistemological challenges are posed by our current desires to carry on studies of religion, of paranormal phenomena, and--a fortiori--of the relations between religious commitment of various types and the highly diversified areas of the paranormal. What method or methods will be useful in these areas? Do we currently possess methods which will be adequate for these purposes or will adequate methods have to be worked out? Might some combination of methods be needed? What spiritual and intellectual preparation will be needed by those who undertake this work?

These questions have import for our assessment of the 25 essays in the two volumes of Proceedings on kundalini. On the one hand, we will be unwise if we take them as singly or jointly providing basic, decisive, and ready-made pointers for immediate development of the study of kundalini by Western investigators whose spirit is not shaped by an appropriate Indian religion. The existence of diverse

interpretations of kundalini; the fact that we are not given in acceptable scientific terms an unmistakably identified area; and the fact that we do not yet possess the worldwide philosophical community to which fundamental questions concerning kundalini can be addressed indicate that there is considerable preliminary work that must be done. These essays would surely be clear to a Hindu who espoused the path from which a particular paper was written. But in both Hinduism and Buddhism there are disagreements among authorities. Further, among those who might be interested in further study of kundalini are exponents of a great variety of spiritual commitments, both Eastern and Western; and it is important that each of these be explicitly and warmly welcomed to that study.

On the other hand, if it would be unwise to by-pass the preliminary work that needs to be done in preparing for a study of kundalini, it would be equally unwise for those who study religious commitment and the paranormal to turn away from these 25 essays. Having first heard and then having read these papers, I believe them to be the totally sincere, fresh expressions of extraordinarily significant experience in the lives of those who have been involved.

The as yet unfulfilled need for adequate means of study of kundalini along with virtually all other aspects of the paranormal in religion (and for that matter, many aspects of the religious that do not involve the psychic at all) is not, however, the only thing we learn from these two conferences. We learn also that in ARPR and in many aspects of religious studies investigators work from their own perspective on religion and the human spirit, their own convictions, their own spiritual needs and hopes and that all of these are highly diverse. This need not, and indeed should not, be seen as a disadvantage to our studies. It could become a disadvantage, and will do so, if we ignore the diversity, assuming that all will be attracted to and persuaded by one particular view which will either replace all the others or will provide the only light by which they can be genuinely understood.

Rather, each of us needs to offer to our academic and spiritual communities our insights and concepts, convictions and commitments, some of which probably have been won by us at a great price in the way of service to truth itself; to other persons; to other-than-human forms of life; and to the Divine, whatever our understanding of the latter may be. At present our diversity in respect to religious commitment is a potentially an advantage which we have not yet sufficiently explored.

IV. For those who might wish to do work with the study of kundalini, some projects are clearly inherent in these Proceedings. I have already mentioned the essential need for adequate methods, which must be continually offered and used as tentative and as open to continuous assessment and modification as inquiry proceeds. The more important a method of inquiry is, the more likely we are to find that it

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not only leads to discoveries, but as we gain more insight into it, it also discloses to us new ways in which we are qua investigators related to what we study.

It follows from what I suggested above that, at this point, extensive work is needed in preparing and interpreting our knowledge of kundalini for study outside Hindu and Buddhist traditions. This calls for study within the milieu of any intellectual/spiritual tradition which has incorporated in its teachings views concerning those human activities, talents, and concerns with which kundalini has traditionally been associated--notably, creativity, various types of revelation, spiritual/moral development, sexuality, psychism, and mysticism. These studies must be interpreted as having several goals: the discerning of definite criteria for the presence of kundalini, its effects, its possible dangers, and the types of manifestation it has in different spiritual paths.

This project will, however, require the determination to study these spiritual paths in a thoroughly non-reductive and non-distorting manner. It should count as a serious error to set out to learn about the forms of the manifestations of kundalini from, say, Greek thought, one of the many forms of Jewish mysticism, Taoism or Shinto, traditional Christianity or the many forms of revisionist Christian theologies, but subsequently to proceed to give what we have learned on these topics a particular interpretation which we impose on the tradition which we ostensibly are examining for its distinctive contribution to the understanding of kundalini and perhaps other aspects of the paranormal.

There are at least three additional issues which pertain to kundalini and which will repay immediate study. Of first importance is the decisive identification of criteria that in any particular instance of possible kundalinic activity we may be reasonably sure that we are dealing with kundalini and not with psychic, mystical, intuitive, creative, or other "gifted" activity which is properly known by another name because either it is not kundalinic in origin or it is only partly and not predominately so. Among the 25 essays some give one or more criteria for recognizing the presence of kundalini; but these are only asserted rather than defended or documented, and in each case critical readers will probably want to ask whether kundalini is necessarily present.

Then, if a researcher becomes satisfied that he has formulated a working hypothesis that he trusts will guide him to the study of kundalinic activity, are there at present any modes of scientific inquiry by which some aspects of kundalinic activity so defined can be investigated? At this juncture of the study of kundalini it will be helpful to compare and contrast the many pre-scientific or extra scientific investigative traditions from which our initial knowledge of kundalini has come.

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Is kundalini valuationally and morally neutral? Some of the essays from the two ARPR conferences include material regarding how the person who has had the kundalinic experiences was explicitly led into spiritual and moral aspiration of a very high-minded type, becoming more and more a person of integrity who is concerned for the well-being of humans and other creatures. But on the other hand, on several occasions during the two conferences on kundalini Hitler's life was mentioned as an example of one possible type of kundalinic activity. At least one essay tells of kundalini finding moral weakness or spiritual inadequacy and having a tendency to increase those faults rather than correct them; and another tells in some detail of the source and type of injury that the arousal of kundalini may bring. And what of this much talked of danger of arousing kundalini? One thinks when reading these warnings of the analogous warnings given in connection with both prescription and non-prescription drugs. If kundalini is as dangerous as those who claim considerable knowledge of it assert, we ought to offer protection and explicit, developed circumstantial information about it for the sake of those who might become personally interested in it.

In this connection it is important to draw attention to the frequent identification of the Christian concept of the Holy Spirit with kundalini. Whatever might be the case with kundalini, the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit are the work of an aspect of reality that is by no means morally and spiritually neutral.

V. After these two years of concentration on kundalini at least three issues stand out as of import for the future of ARPR. (1) In this developing area where even the method or methods of investigation must be selected, or created, before we can make real progress in the study of kundalini, we possess a tremendous opportunity for epistemological discoveries along with our paranormal findings. (2) The taking advantage of this opportunity will make tremendous demands on our investigative good will and integrity. And this pertains to each of us as an individual. ARPR, like any other academic community, will be no more noteworthy and successful, and will provide no more skilled academic leadership than the determination of a sufficient number of individuals who wish to serve truth-seeking rather than be served by it. (3) Like many other organizations which are committed to fostering inquiry we need a true pluralism--the recognition of de facto diversity among our members and the welcoming this fact because each participant's spiritual experience, goals, and devotion to truth should be seen as potentially a gift to our inquiry. Each participant is to be viewed as someone who has a unique contribution to make, not as someone to be persuaded by us or else ignored or turned away.

Mary Carman Rose

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
KUNDALINI AND THE PARANORMAL

Paul Pond

Developing and using psychic powers can distract one from spiritual goals, cause psychological and physical damage, and, if misused, have adverse ethical effects on both the individual and society. Yoga theory views prana as a subtle intelligent life energy unlike any energy modern science is investigating. Kundalini is the mechanism by which an enhanced flow of prana reaches the brain, where under the right conditions, its operation can lead to mystical experience, psychic abilities, etc. The fact that prana may be the source of psychic phenomena may explain why it is difficult to verify psi experiments empirically.

PSYCHIC PHENOMENA, YOGA, AND KUNDALINI. Webster defines "paranormal" as something which cannot be explained scientifically. This definition can be applied to a broad base of occurrences--i.e., mystical experience, occult practices, magic, miracles and other psychic phenomena. For the purpose of this paper we will confine the topic to Kundalini, its connection to psychic phenomena and the need for caution in the pursuit of this knowledge.

The Kundalini hypothesis¹ holds that there is a psychophysiological mechanism responsible for mystical experience, genius, psychic abilities and, under certain conditions, some types of mental illness. Mystical experience is considered the ultimate goal of the Kundalini process. Psychic powers, such as telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, psychokinesis, etc. are believed to be gifts that come with a Kundalini awakening.

The fact that Kundalini is associated with the appearance of siddhis, or psychic gifts, is presented in esoteric writings. For example, the first canto of the Kashmiri hymn "Panchastavi" illustrates this relationship: "O Goddess Tripura; Pervading the visible and invisible worlds, whatsoever be the Siddhi for which Thy devotees of stable intellect pray...they undoubtedly, freed from all obstruction, gain fulfillment..."² In the third canto, verse 15: "...what Siddhi there is, O Thou adored one of the Deities, that cannot be gained by Thy worship and what Yoga is there that cannot be achieved by centering the mind on Thee?"

The Kundalini hypothesis further asserts that there is an evolution going on in the brain which is refining both the body and the mind and preparing it for the ultimate mystical experience. Concentration on psychic powers alone could interfere with this evolving process, producing a life style which at best interrupts or at worst damages this evolution. Under pressure to "perform," it is not unheard of that psychics and healers become tempted to fake it, thus becoming slaves to their abilities, jeopardizing their credibility and often their physical and mental well-being.

The Kundalini hypothesis also holds that this energy is intelligent and that the subject is not the one in control of it. If this is so, other than preparing oneself, i.e., living a balanced life and practicing methods recommended by all spiritual belief systems, we are not in control of Kundalini and should proceed with this understanding in mind.

Classical yoga as described by Patanjali contains eight steps or limbs that should be followed by the earnest spiritual seeker.³ The first two limbs, yama (restraint) and niyama (discipline) are essentially the proper codes of conduct and thought that must be followed before any real spiritual advancement can occur. The next three, asana (posture), pranayama (control of breathing) and pratyahara (control of senses) lead the seeker to the necessary control of the physical senses and prana. The final three stages are collectively known as samyama. Dharana (concentration), dhyana (unbroken contemplation or meditation) and samadhi (complete absorption) are meant to bring about control of consciousness. Certainly in the West, the second and third stages have received the most attention. However, we will see the importance of the first stage in relation to our present discussion.

In accordance with Book III of the Yoga-Sutras, once the practitioner has reached the third stage, samyama, certain "miraculous powers" or siddhis are acquired. These powers or perfections are described in many ways and include what are currently considered to be occult or psychic powers. From this perspective the attainment of siddhis is an indication of the seeker's "spiritual" progress.

The lives of saints and mystics contain a wealth of miraculous episodes. "In India an accomplished yogi has always been considered to be mahasiddha, a possessor of occult powers..."⁴ Miraculous powers are ascribed to those mystics and saints, such as Mohammed and Buddha, who have strongly denounced their use. Gopi Krishna says Kundalini is the basic lever in all forms of Yoga and siddhis are the harvest of an awakened Kundalini and its ascent into the brain.⁵

Lee Sanella believes that the Kundalini process is not necessarily connected with the appearance of psychic phenomena, i.e., there are psychics who have not undergone the psychophysiological transformation he associates with Kundalini, and there are those in whom Kundalini is active but who show no apparent psychic talents.⁶ He does tend, however, to agree with Gopi Krishna's appraisal that "Kundalini is the real cause of all so-called spiritual and psychic phenomena."

WARNINGS FROM RELIGIONS AND SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS. Warnings of the dangers of the use of psychic powers or siddhis come from a variety of sources, from biblical time to the present. These warnings run the gamut from caution

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to outright damnation. Both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible contain warnings of varying degrees. For example, Leviticus 19: 31 says "...and the Lord spoke unto Moses 'Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them. I am the Lord, your God.'" Deuteronomy 18: 10-12 records "...There shall not be found among you anyone who maketh his son or daughter to pass through the fire or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch...or a charmer or a conjurer with familiar spirits, or a wizard or a necromancer ...for all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord..." From St. Paul, Corinthians, 13: 2, "And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing..."

It is interesting to note that Jesus never used his powers to exalt himself when goaded by the priests or his tempter in the desert. Buddha, not unlike St. Paul, was concerned that the possession of psychic powers might tempt the seeker away from his original goal, mystical experience. Yet, Buddha (as well as Patanjali) took the acquisition of siddhis to be an indication of the seekers' spiritual progress. The possession of siddhis is not harmful in itself but the seeker must not succumb to their temptation and must not exhibit these "powers" in front of others. Buddha forbade the use and display of siddhis since he considered them doubly dangerous. They tempt the practitioner with a "vain magical mastery of the world" and confuse the minds of the public at large.⁷ According to Patanjali, Book III: 37, "these powers stand in contradistinction to the highest spiritual vision. In manifestation they are called magical powers."⁸ Thus these powers in the waking state represent obstacles in the mystical state.

Evelyn Underhill has given a splendid explanation of the difference between the pursuit of self-knowledge and the pursuit of occult knowledge. She relates mankind's attitude toward the unseen in terms of two paths: the "way of mysticism" and the "way of magic."⁹ Accordingly, she says "the fundamental difference between the two is this: magic wants to get, mysticism wants to give..." Underhill goes on to say that "the great mystics themselves...are unanimous in warning their disciples against the danger of attributing too much importance to 'visions' and 'voices.'"

Warnings of the abuse of siddhis come from all ages and from varied belief systems. Lad Ded, a famous Hindu mystic of the 14th century is described by Jayalal Kaul: "She cleansed the mirror of her heart for the Truth to shine unmistakable and clear. She took the middle path, of moderation in food and drink, neither pandering to her appetites nor undergoing extreme penance. Nor did she hanker after the siddhis, the miraculous powers which she condemned as fraud and jugglery."¹⁰

Kirpal Singh, 20th Century spiritual master, in Man! Know Thyself writes, "Master-Saints never show any mira-

cles, except in very rare cases, to a disciple due to special circumstances. Miracles are in accordance with the laws of Nature but are nevertheless terrible entangling webs detrimental to the higher ideals of man to approach the Almighty God...The miraculous powers achieved after lengthy periods are instrumental in doing both good and harm, and as they are utilized more to harm than anything else, are looked down upon by all truly spiritual persons. The Masters are in possession of Supreme Power but their mission is sacred...Those who are anxious to see miracles are not true seekers."¹¹

Vera Stanley Adler in Finding of the Third Eye, also points out the pitfalls of the seeker after Truth. She says one of the distractions is sensationalism and warns, "It must always be remembered that sensationalism (or emotional excitement) is to the mentality what sexual overindulgence is to the body. Even religious emotion can be a type of mental sensuality and therefore unbalancing."¹²

If we can accept the basic teaching of Emanuel Swedenborg that there are good spirits and evil spirits associated with man and it is possible to contact them, his warnings have significant meaning. His teachings indicate that we are more likely to contact evil spirits because these spirits are fulfilled and satisfied by being associated with people in the world who are doing the things they love. Terry Schnarr, Director of Information for Swedenborg in Canada, gives us his interpretation of Swedenborg's teachings: "Basically his warning is not to seek contact with the other world, as is the warning of the Bible. This does not mean that contact cannot be made, only that it should not be sought after. If and when it happens naturally, the chances are very good the Lord arranged it to happen for good use."¹³

Wilson Van Dusen in The Presence of Other Worlds talks of Swedenborg's reluctance to display his miraculous powers and says, "In several places he said that miracles have a coercive effect on belief and destroy the free will in spiritual matters."¹⁴ In his book, The Mystics of Islam, Reynold Nicholson says, "In early Mohammedan Vitae Sanctorum it is not uncommon to meet with sayings to the effect that miraculous powers are comparatively of small account." The Persian saint, Bayazid, said "God used to bring me wonders and miracles, but I paid no heed to them; and when He saw that I did so, he gave me the means of attaining to knowledge of Himself."¹⁵

We have quoted from a variety of spiritual teachers and religious traditions to show that the appearance of siddhis is universally accepted as an occurrence on the path to self-knowledge. Further, each suggests that too much attention to the display of these powers will prevent the seeker from attaining the ultimate goal--mystical experience.

CAUTION FROM PSYCHICS/EXAMPLES OF PROBLEMS RELATED TO PSYCHIC ACTIVITY: In addition to the warnings from estab-

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lished religious traditions, occultists and practicing psychics have issued their own concerns. Underhill quotes from Eliphas Levi, a 19th century occult philosopher: "Too deep a study of mysteries of nature may estrange from God the careless investigator, in whom mental fatigue paralyses the ardour of the heart." Edgar Cayce, the 20th century medium, had some very specific views concerning the development and use of psychic abilities. He felt that psychic talents should not be sought in themselves. Cayce, like Gopi Krishna, felt that psychic talents were the direct result of the activity of Kundalini and that the practice of spiritual discipline was a prerequisite for a healthy awakening.¹⁶

Following are a few examples from his readings: "Development in the spiritual sense by meditation and prayer is dependent upon the Creative, the soul or spiritual energy trapped in the body, rather than upon that which is wholly of the material. This brings about what may be termed psychic development of individuals." And "The activities of the glands used aright may bring serenity, hope, peace, faith, understanding... Misdirected, the energies may bring doubts, fears, apprehensions, contentions, disorders, disruptions... raised in power and then misdirected may bring death itself." Hugh Lynn Cayce, Edgar's son, repeatedly mentions the destruction of personality, the suffering caused by oversensitivity and the complications that could result through ignorance and misuse of such energies.¹⁷

Shortly before her death, the theosophist, H.P. Blavatsky wrote: "Psychic capacities held perfectly under control, checked and directed by the Manasic principle, are valuable aids in development. But these capacities running riot, controlling instead of controlled, using instead of being used, lead the student into the most dangerous delusions and the certainty of moral destruction..."¹⁸

All seem to agree on the danger inherent in the development of psychic powers as ends in themselves. Not only does the earnest seeker risk losing sight of his real goal but he may suffer both psychological and physical damage. The following cases are illustrative:

In the Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology, Leslie Shepard recounts the experiences of Eusapia Palladino, a medium whose psychic powers were observed by numerous academics, including Cesare Lombroso and Mme. Curie. Lombroso noted that although Palladino possessed a keen visual memory and remarkable intuition and subtlety for an uneducated person, she had many marked characteristics, i.e., mood swings, hallucinations, strange phobias and was given to violent outbursts. It was also observed that she became ill immediately after a seance, sometimes for more than two days when she could not eat and would vomit. She began to use deception and fraud to avoid the physical discomfort of using her powers.¹⁹

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According to scientists who have worked with and noted her abilities, the blind Bulgarian psychic Vanga Dimitrova is unhappy with her psychic gift. "She's often very sad about the things she foresees... But, on the other hand, she can't live without it. She can't stop." This suggests that a person can become obsessed by psychic desires and abilities. Vanga admits her own inabilities to control or access the images that give rise to her psychic abilities. She says "I can't force them. They may be about the past, the present, or the future."²⁰ Nina Kulagina, a Russian who has demonstrated psychokinesis (PK) has developed serious medical problems as a result. In addition "...she feels a strong energy like a prickling sensation begin to move up her spine to the base of the brain. She has also said that she knows when she is going to move an object because she feels pain and her blood pressure rises."²¹

It is not difficult to imagine the effect that misuse of psychic powers could have on the ethical development of the seeker. If, as has been expressed so often by the great teachers, the spiritual student should use his gifts for material gain or fame, he has virtually destroyed his moral progress and has surely traded the real thing for fool's gold. On another level, what might happen to the balance of power, world economies or social laws if someone with highly advanced powers chose to use them for personal gain? These and the other dangers cautioned against have lead us to believe that investigation into the paranormal should be approached carefully.

CONCLUSION. We have discussed the appearance of psychic gifts or siddhis as a mark of progress in spiritual development. Traditional warnings from a wide variety of spiritual disciplines and religious traditions have been cited emphasize the inherent danger in the mishandling of these "talents" by the seeker. Even the verse quoted from the first canto of Panchastavi emphasizes that the seeker must be of stable intellect and free from all obstruction. The fact that definite demonstrative signs appear as proof of spiritual progress suggest that Yoga was indeed developed as a certifiable science. This proof was available to the seeker and could also serve as evidence to others that spiritual progress had been made. Thus both the student and teacher had a way to distinguish factual progress from wishful thinking.

It should be emphasized that the appearance of siddhis is not proof that mystical consciousness has been attained, only a sign that progress has been made. Many have made the mistake of equating psychic talent with mystical consciousness. The unwary seeker may fall prey to the distraction provided by appearance of these "gifts," resulting in the loss of the spiritual goal. In addition, physical and psychological damage may result. A few examples of this have also been cited.

Given these concerns, those in whom psychic gifts appear should follow the standards outlined in classical

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yoga theory. In addition to a moderate life style with proper nutrition, particular attention should be paid to the first two steps of yoga: restraint and discipline. This is equally important for someone who may not be practicing a directed spiritual discipline.

Extreme caution must also be practiced by scientists using psychics in their research, lest they "push" the student too far and cause damage. The student/teacher relationship of traditional yoga was there for good reason. The essence of spiritual discipline can only be truly understood by one who practices it on himself. Today's scientists need to understand that in dealing with consciousness they are attempting to directly probe a superintelligent life energy. This energy--prana--has its own agenda unlike the insentient energies accepted by present day science. This may mean that psi-experiments cannot be verified or repeated in the standard empirical way.

Gopi Krishna offers a possible explanation for the difficulty in establishing empirically verifiable data from psi-experiments.

How can nature allow man to win this sovereign position unless he has also gained the capability to shoulder the highly increased responsibility in a befitting manner and not to abuse the almost superhuman powers gained. This is the reason why in every case of the awakening of Kundalini secret devices in the brain come into play to mold the individual towards a state of mind where the possibility of abuse of psychic power is eliminated. This is also the reason why almost all those who possess psychic talents are never able to control the power or to remain alert and conscious when the phenomena come to pass.²²

Kundalini Research A general framework for the verification of paranormal experience must be developed and tested as part of any serious research into the Kundalini experience.²³ According to classical yoga theory and other research one who has attained the transcendent state should display the following characteristics: new knowledge (genius), sense of inner light or sound, detachment, cosmic expansion, religious impulse, highly developed moral nature, psychic ability. From Vedic times, one in whom Kundalini is awakened was believed to be transformed from an average person into an intellectual prodigy, an eloquent speaker, even a poet. Even Whitman said that the future man will be a poet.

From "A Prayer to Columbus":

After the seas are all cross'd, (as they seem
already cross'd)
After the great captains and engineers have
accomplish'd their works,

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After the noble inventors--after the scientists,
the chemist, the geologist, ethnologist,
Finally shall come the Poet, worthy that name:
The true Son of God shall come, singing his songs.

As Gopi Krishna has pointed out, the development of increased intellectual powers and literary talents, i.e., genius, as part of the Kundalini process has essentially been ignored by modern authors. In Cosmic Consciousness, Dr. Bucke also points out that intellectual illumination is a key feature of one who has attained what he calls "The cosmic Sense."²⁴ The association of intellectual development with spiritual perfection is constantly referred to in the traditional writings on Kundalini and should be used as a test point for anyone claiming a full Kundalini awakening.

To illustrate the "powers" ascribed to one in whom Kundalini is awakened we reproduce portions of three verses from the sanskrit Sat-Cakra-Nirupana (Description of the Six Centres) as presented by Arthur Avalon in "The Serpent Power" From verses 10 and 11:

...Her (Kundalini) lustre is as that of a strong flash of young strong lightning. Her sweet murmur is like the indistinct hum of swarms of love-mad bees. She produces melodious poetry and Bandha (literary composition in which verse is arranged in the manner of a diagram of picture)...²⁵

Here we can clearly see the obvious reference to light, sound, and literary talents. From verse 27:

Foremost among Yogis, he even is dearer than the dearest to women. He is pre-eminently wise and full of noble deeds. His senses are completely under control. His mind in its intense concentration is engrossed in thoughts of the Brahman. His inspired speech flows like a stream of (clear) water. He is like the Devata...and he is able at will to enter another body.

The above clearly illustrate the characteristics of high moral nature, detachment, cosmic expansion, inspiration, and psychic talents.

All those claiming some type of Kundalini awakening should be measured by the presence of the characteristics listed above. Unless those professing knowledge and expertise of the Kundalini process can be tested to determine the validity of their understanding, how can we determine a balanced path from an unbalanced one? Many sincere seekers have paid with their mental and physical health in search of transcendental experience.

Those claiming partial awakening or an increase in Kundalini activity could also be measured against the same standards. The expected results would of course not come up

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to those of a full awakening. In any case, some marked degree of the main characteristics should be measurable.

In all cases further study of physiological changes could be made on those claiming to have some degree of Kundalini experience. The changes and the energy involved may be subtle but if paranormal states--mystical consciousness--genius--psychic gifts--are real they must be somehow anchored in the human physiology and empirically measurable.

The study of paranormal phenomena provides a fertile field for understanding the Kundalini process. In this investigation both the seeker and researcher must practice yoga--especially yama (restraint) and niyama (discipline). Above all when investigating the paranormal, caution appears to be the key exercise.

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THE KUNDALINI PARADIGM:
IN ITS RELATION TO REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

G. Philippe Menos and Karen A. Jones Menos

The kundalini paradigm, interpreted here as hypothesis, is developed along the lines indicated by Gopi Krishna's evolutionary perspective. The manifold significance of this perspective for our understanding of revelation and inspiration is then explored.

(Ed. note: These pages are extracted from a much longer essay prepared by the authors specifically for the 1989 ARPR annual conference, portions of which were presented at that conference.)

In his exposition of a transpersonal view of evolution, Ken Wilbur reminds us that the "perennial philosophy" has been embraced in part or in whole by many thinkers, including Spinoza, Einstein, Schopenhauer, Jung, Plato, and Isaac Newton. Huxley tells us that "to...first-hand exponents of the Perennial Philosophy those who know them have generally given the name 'saint' or 'prophet,' 'sage' or 'enlightened one'..."¹ To this list may be added many other illustrious names such as Shankaracharya, Sri Aurobindo, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and Gopi Krishna from whose experience and research the kundalini paradigm is derived. Although the ideas championed by Gopi Krishna are not unique, he re-synthesizes old ideas to propose a model for the scientific exploration of the potential of consciousness to evolve.

The kundalini paradigm hypothesizes that the operation of a psycho-somatic evolutionary mechanism in the human frame, sometimes called kundalini, is responsible for genius, creative expression, when its workings are benign, and insanity when the mechanism goes awry. According to this view, the process of evolution is planned.² Human evolution is designed to advance in the direction of expanded consciousness, such that human perception becomes cognizant of the world beyond the present sensory limitations. Perennial mystical experience, which experiences the unity behind the universe side by side with the diversity perceived by the sense, is posited as the next stage of human evolution.

In the higher state of consciousness, the mystic or sage witnesses the existence of a super-intelligent energy behind creation, and the universe is understood to be a projection of consciousness. This view of the cosmos resembles the trend in modern science, which is moving away from the mechanistic and materialistic paradigm of the preceding two centuries: "...Matter has become but a condensed form of energy which dematerializes into radiation. The material atom is already dissolved into more than thirty non-material, cryptic arcane perplexing, enigmatic and inscrutable elementary particles."

As James Jeans wrote some decades ago, "the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine. Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder into the realm of matter; we are beginning to suspect that we ought to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter."³ In the perennial philosophy, the cosmic super-intelligence is seen as the architect behind life and evolution, using organic compounds to develop a creature which is capable of self-knowledge. The same energy that guides the conception and development of a child is responsible also for the continued unfolding of the adult. Terms to denote this cosmic energy include chi, vital life, the Holy Spirit, and prana, which all refer to the breath of life, the active agent behind inspiration. In the individual, the activity of the brain and nervous system depends on this "subtle life element." Prana pervades every cell of every tissue and organism, "much in the same way that electricity pervades each atom of a battery."⁴

As used by yoga authorities, prana refers to both the cosmic life energy and its subtle biological conductor in the body. Describing prana, Gopi Krishna writes, "All systems of Yoga are based on the supposition that living bodies owe their existence to the agency of an extremely subtle immaterial substance pervading the universe and designated as Prana, which is the cause of all organic phenomena...The term Prana or Prana-Shakti is generally applied to that aspect of the cosmic energy which operates in the organic sphere, as nervous impulse and vitality, while the generic name Shakti is applied to every form of energy, animate and inanimate..."⁵ Carl F. von Weisacker, in his analysis of prana, concludes that the concept is not necessarily incompatible with present-day physics. Pointing out that prana is spatially extended and vitalizing, von Weisacker compares this "moving potency", as he terms it, to the probability amplitude of quantum theory.⁶

Kundalini, a Sanskrit term meaning "coiled up," is the evolutionary potency of prana. The term "kundalini" designates a force which is normally latent or dormant, but which can be activated by spiritual disciplines and made to act like a spring when it is released. In the individual human being, prana is thought to be concentrated in the sex-energy as a biochemical essence composed of the subtlest elements, existing as radiation on a subatomic level.⁶ According to the kundalini paradigm, the reproductive system also functions as the evolutionary mechanism. By the "arousal of kundalini" is meant the reversal of the reproductive system, as a fine stream of nerve energy is sublimated and transmitted up the cerebro-spinal system, irradiating the brain. In one place, Gopi Krishna thus described the effect of awakening of kundalini: "With the additional fuel supplied by the enhanced flow of vital energy, the brain becomes more intensely alive; the surface consciousness raises above body sensations and its perception faculty is vastly enlarged, rendering it cognizant of superphysical existences. In this condition the first object of perception is Prana, experienced as a lustrous immaterial stuff, sentient and in a

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state of rapid vibration both within and outside the body, extending boundlessly on every side.⁸ A fully awakened kundalini facilitates over time the bioenergetics transformation necessary to experience the state of union of the soul with the Oversoul, which is denoted by the term "yoga".

According to the various systems of yoga symbology there are a series of psycho-physical centers along the cerebrospinal system, corresponding to anatomical nerve clusters. In Sanskrit, these centers are known as chakras, or wheels, which are said to turn and radiate with energy as they are anointed by the circulation of kundalini-prana. Different schools of yoga identify different numbers of chakras. Some of the Buddhist Tantric literature emphasize four main centers⁹ as do the Native American Hopi people.¹⁰ However, most Buddhist, Hindu, and alchemical systems seem to describe seven centers. Most esoteric traditions of the West describe seven centers, as for example in the Alchemical Marriage of Christian Rosencreutz, a seventeenth century Rosicrucian tract.¹¹ Waters suggests that accounts of the chakras vary only because of differences in emphasis, not in fundamentally different views of the basic energy of transformation. We share the same biology, regardless of ideology. We will not here discuss each chakra individually, but refer to reader to sources given in the bibliography.¹²

At each chakra along the cerebrospinal system, or Susumna as this is known in Sanskrit, there are two undulating, intersecting nerve channels, known as Ida and Pingala, corresponding to the sympathetic and parasympathetic chains of nerves. Ida and Pingala are also termed the lunar and solar channels to mark their complementarity. When kundalini is active, she circulates throughout the spinal network of nerves, entering the brain via the Anja chakra, the sixth center located between the eyebrows. It is here, at the place of final confluence of the three channels of energy, that the experience of union begins, as the solar and lunar forces merge in the brain, radiating the seventh center, the neural network named the Brahma-rendra. As Gopi Krishna expresses it, "There now occurs another change in the organ of perception, namely the brain, to be able to witness homogeneity where sense impressions continue to present an infinitely diversified world. Otherwise, the new experience can only be allotted the position of a dream...It is the flow of this ambrosial stream into the brain through the spinal duct, essential for its organic transformation in the deepest layers, which causes the ecstasy when the state of union is achieved."¹³

It is at this stage of the transformation, according to the paradigm, that revelation becomes a reality. The symbol of the Ajna chakra is AUM with the four stages of consciousness: A for the waking state, U for dreaming, M for dreamless sleep, and AUM as a whole for turiya, the fourth state of perennial mystical consciousness that pervades the previous three states. According to the same scripture, AUM represents that which transcends time and is identified with Atman, the individualized aspect of the oversoul. AUM is

the Supreme Being in the form of sound: "OM is Brahman", says the Taittiriya Upanishad (I.8). The experience and transformation symbolized by Aum is described by Gopi Krishna:

Yoga represents a new form of knowledge gained through the operation of a normally dormant, marvelous chamber in the brain, called Brahmarendra by the ancient adepts, a new form of vision, known as the opening of the Third Eye or the Tenth Door or the Sixth Sense, and a new form of ideation, known as inspiration, "Shruti", revelation, Vahi, Afflatus, etc. In short, Yoga represents a paranormal activity of the brain from which all great masterpieces of literature, art, philosophy, science, and spiritual knowledge have originated...I have no words to describe the glory and grandeur of the new state of awareness, which belong to the accomplished Yogi, in whom the dormant centre in the brain has been activated leading to the opening of a new super-sensory channel of perception...designed to probe the mystery of creation, beyond the probe of the senses and the intellect.¹⁴

This center in the brain is the "eye of the soul" described by Plato in the "Republic" (VII: 519b3; 533d2), and its partial or complete awakening provides the channel for communication with the Cosmic Mind, and from thence the outpouring of inspiration and revelation. It is significant that in the Native American Hopi tradition also, it is at the highest psycho-physical center, "at the top of the head", that man is thought to "receive his life and communicate with the Creator".¹⁵ Thus does the baptism of the human system by the fire of kundalini bring the experience of union and revelation that is the cornerstone of the perennial philosophy.

According to the kundalini paradigm, this transformation is the goal of the evolutionary processes active in humanity. The paradigm postulates that (1) the prophets of the past were early prototypes of the next stage in evolution and (2) inspired creators, in any field, exhibit features of evolutionary enhancement. As forerunners, these individuals enjoy the advantages of early success as well as the disadvantage of being pioneers in still-uncharted territories. Owing to the intensity of the transformation and the delicate nature of the human system, it would not be surprising to see a wide variation in the degree of success and mental balance achieved by historical examples of prophets, mystics, and other creative people. However, as it is not the purpose of this essay to consider the aspect of mental health, we will not dwell on this topic.

The kundalini paradigm also states that the evolutionary transformation can be duplicated and verified, in the same manner as any scientific experiment, if the proper procedures and conditions are followed. The procedures and

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conditions are elaborated in the sacred literature of every culture, and include all forms of yoga and meditation that attempt to harmoniously develop the whole personality--the physical, mental, ethical and the spiritual. Examples include Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga or the sunny path as the Sage has named it, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Taoist Yoga and the practice of Ch'an or Zen. "By each of these disciplines", says Plato in the "Republic" (VII: 527e), "a certain organ of the soul is both purified and reanimated which is blinded and buried by studies of another kind; an organ better worth saving than ten thousand eyes, since truth is perceived by it alone."

Attention or active concentration of the mind is the basic lever, the psychosomatic exercise to accelerate the process of evolution. The more intensive exercises to focus and concentrate the mind, to the point of effortless contemplation, are the most efficacious instruments to stimulate the process.¹⁶ Application of the mind is the key to success in any endeavor, including spiritual development, though it is safest to meditate in the context of a balanced lifestyle, developing simultaneously all aspects of the personality. The foundation of spiritual evolution, in all authentic systems of individuation lies in ethical development and altruistic growth, since the energy of evolution is the energy of love par excellence.¹⁷

There is a significant difference between the type of mind culture advocated by the kundalini paradigm and the passive types of meditation that are in vogue at the present time. Perhaps this difference can be illumined by highlighting the distinction made in the kundalini paradigm between revelation and mediumship, or channeling, as this phenomenon is now called.

According to the kundalini paradigm, there are two distinct methods of approaching the paranormal and the transcendental. One methodology centers on the cultivation of attention, striving for the quality of effortless concentration that is an endowment of the exceptionally talented mind. Lord Keynes writes of Isaac Newton that:

...The clue to his mind is to be found in his unusual powers of continuous concentrated introspection...His peculiar gift was the power of holding continuously in his mind a purely mental problem until he had seen straight through it. I fancy his pre-eminence is due to his muscles of intuition being the strongest and most enduring with which a man has ever been gifted...Newton could hold a problem in his mind for hours and days and weeks until it surrendered him its secret.¹⁸

The objective of the first approach to the divine or occult is to cultivate this ability by voluntary effort, trying to focus the mind for prolonged periods until

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attention is sustained without visible strain. As Gopi Krishna elaborates, all healthy methods of spiritual development are designed to this end: "There are detailed directions in all Yoga treatises on how this state of unbroken fixity of attention can be achieved. The target to be attained is that the observing mind and the object contemplated should fuse into one."¹⁹

For most of us, this target can only be approached with great effort. To achieve one-pointedness of the mind Gopi Krishna stresses that the practitioner has to maintain a state of alertness to prevent the mind from slipping into passive or drowsy states. This is supported by all the authorities on meditation, such as the Bhagavad Gita:

Then with reason armed with resolution, let the seeker quietly lead the mind into the Spirit, and let all his thoughts be silence. And whenever the mind unsteady and restless strays away from the Spirit, let him ever and forever lead it again to the Spirit...The mind is indeed restless, Arjuna: it is indeed hard to train. But by constant practice and by freedom from passions the mind in truth can be trained. (6, 25, 26, 27)

And again from the Upanishads:

Taking hold of the bow, One should fix on it an arrow, sharpened with meditation. Drawing the string with a mind absorbed in the thought of Brahman hit, O good-looking one, that very target which is the Immutable, (Mandukya Upanishad, II, 2 3.)

The perennial philosophy is unanimous in stressing the active, will-full training of the mind, as a requirement of self-knowledge and paranormal perception.

The second methodology relies on the voluntary descent of the mind to the subconscious, using autohypnosis or passive forms of meditation: These are the "negative forms of concentration, forbidden by the ancient masters, which allow the mind to think loosely or wander ceaselessly during meditation, leading to passive, somnolent or quiescent states indicated by the alpha signal in biofeedback"²⁰ By practicing vacuity of thought or by deliberately causing fatigue to the optic and auditory nerves, it is possible to stimulate vivid psychic and visionary experiences, to manifest an alternate personality, or to display some talent in automatic writing--all produced by the subconscious. But the state resulting from the second method is not the state of intuition from which self-knowledge and revelation proceed:

[The self-hypnotizing yogi] can voluntarily dive into the depths of his subconscious, but that only means descending into a dream state, not as one does in sleep, but with deliberate plunging into a

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hallucinatory condition, transported to a world of being where thoughts take on a visionary aspect and fancies assume vivid appearance somewhat akin to the illusory states induced by drugs. At best it can only signify volitional excursion into the dream territory, often with some therapeutic results, but nothing more. There is at present a general ignorance about the fact that the practice of Yoga or for that matter of any form of religious discipline, can lead to two fundamentally different mental states. One is brought about by autohypnosis, creating a hallucinatory inner world of vision, with or without psychic powers. The other is a state of transformed consciousness, leading to glorious supersensory planes of being, attended always by genius and psychic powers in one form or another characteristic of all great seers, prophets, mystics, and Yogis of the past.²¹

The difference between the first and second methods for approaching the paranormal is the difference between sublime and subliminal consciousness. The word "subliminal" is a formation of "sub" below, and "limin", threshold of consciousness, meaning to the region that is below the surface of the mind. But the word "sublime" has a very different derivation, originating in "sublimis", which is to come up from below the threshold, rising in the air or that which climbs a steep slope, hence lofty. Sublime is related to sublimitas and sublimare, to elevate, and sublimatis, whence the adjective and verb "sublimate." Thus the wisdom embedded in our language: the subliminal is not the sublime, and the sublime requires a transformation engendered by sublimation, in the positive sense of transmuting the energy of love.

There are countless teachers in India, Tibet and China, who have erroneously promulgated the second methodology for approaching the occult. The subliminal approach to the paranormal may also be the predominant mode presently advocated by the New Age movement--witness the rapid spread of channeling. The psychic phenomenon now known as "channeling" is no different from mediumship. The bioenergetic and psychic mechanism behind each is the same. Examples of channeling may be found in Jane Roberts (Seth); Jach Pursel (Lazaris); J.Z. Knight (Ramtha), various sources of Space brothers such as Tuella, A Course in Miracles, Mark and Elizabeth Clare Prophet, Shirley MacLaine, Edgar Cayce, Ken Carey (Raphael), and Sanaya Roman (Orin), and Duane Parker (DaBen). An excellent study of the subject is found in Jon Klimo's Channeling.

Objectively and subjectively channeling appears to vary somewhat in its manifestation--from a full trance to the lighter trance of "open channeling".²² But in all cases, the mechanism behind the phenomenon is the same, namely the subliminal access to psychic communication using self-suggestion and auto-hypnosis, not self-mastery and self-transformation.

Consider the example and testimony of Jach Pursel, who is the medium for the well-known entity called "Lazarus". Jach Pursel has never communicated directly and consciously with Lazaris, as he is "asleep" during the channeling episode. This is the opposite of revelation, in which the spiritual genius or mystic experiences an "awakening" and perceives the super-intelligent energy that is the source of knowledge. Pursel's awareness of Lazaris, the alternate personality, is restricted to video and audio recordings.

Pursel began to channel following an attempt at meditation, practicing in a manner that would always lead to drowsiness and sleep. This type of meditation, more properly called simply relaxation or visualization, conforms to the subliminal path. This practice could not be further from the authentic meditation taught by Patanjali, or by the Patriarchs of Zen, who go to the extreme of striking a blow to prevent the subject from falling asleep.

Although Pursel's first manifestation of Lazaris occurred spontaneously as he slipped by accident into an unconscious state, he later developed a "technique" to ensure that he could enter into the required state of mind on demand. He described this technique in an interview with Jon Klimo:

Over time Pursel has learned how to efficiently enter the particular type of unconscious state that has always led to Lazaris appearing. He closes his eyes, takes a few deep breaths, relaxes, and imagines himself descending a ten-rung ladder, rung by rung, counting backward. Reaching the bottom, he begins a second round by imagining ten slow motion backward circling somersaults. Usually by around the sixth of these, all becomes dark. It seems like only a moment later, he says, when he opens his eyes and finds himself back in the room, the entire intervening session lost to him.²³

This self-disclosure is a classic description of self-hypnosis.

On the spectrum from will to light trance, the case of Jach Pursel falls on the side of the extreme unconscious. But suggestion plays a role in cultivating the lighter trance states as well. This is shown in the book Opening to Channel, by Sanaya Roman and Duane Packer which is a sort of how-to manual for channelers. The descriptions found in this book on "relaxing and focusing," "quieting the mind," "attuning with life-force energy," assists the individual in techniques of self-suggestion. To underscore this technique, the "opening the channel" approach makes extensive use of imagination: imagination entering it...The unstated assumption is that practice in creating these imaginations will eventually result in creating these perceptions; practice imagining anything long enough, and one will see it, real or not, without any evolutionary transformation at all. Indivi-

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duals with very powerful imaginations need almost no practice at all. It is not surprising that, in their description of the type of person who has the greatest facility for channeling, Roman and Packer mention people who "have vivid imaginations and like to daydream and fantasize."²⁴

It's interesting to note that Sanaya Roman, before becoming a channel, had a deep interest in the Seth books by Jane Roberts, a prior example of mediumship. It's also revealing that Roman used the Ouija board regularly, and that is was here that an entity later did the mediumistic experience switch from the board to Sanaya's voice, but the process was essentially the same, as she described: "I closed my eyes and listened in the same way I had listened to the messages as they came through on the Ouija board." This clearly shows the identity of channeling with other mediumistic phenomena.

Manly Hall, the specialist in occultism and comparative mythology, has frequently written on the merits and demerits of mediumism. As he has devoted considerable years to research on the topic, we will quote him at some length in response to questions on the value, shortcomings, and dangers of spiritualistic phenomena:

In answering this question, it is not my desire to discredit the sincerity of spiritualists but rather to point out certain hazards which believing people, enthused with an idea, are apt to overlook. A spiritualistic seance is a negative vortex of physical forces. Such a vortex draws into itself discarnate entities of various kinds, as well as numerous larvae or elementals of the astral world. The average medium has no power to control the entities that impinge themselves upon the nexus of the sympathetic nervous system. In the seance both the medium and the sitters are helpless victims of such malefic entities as may care to attack them. Therefore, there is constant danger in seances that the sitters will take away with them the elemental beings that have attached themselves to various parts of the aura.²⁵

He further elaborates on the effort to communicate with discarnate spirits and forces:

...While there can be no reasonable doubt that a certain percentage of physical phenomena is genuine, those who give themselves to mediumship and other forms of psychism are greatly victimized through their faith and credulity. To turn for advice to the dead, is to be unphilosophical. Those who have passed out of this life are not better fitted to advise the living than those still functioning in this world... There are mysteries in the psychical world that few mortals understand, and he who dabbles with the subtle

forces of the unseen universe is apt to repent his audacity. The majority of messages that come from behind the veil are vague...nor is deception unusual. Many lives have been ruined by psychic vagaries. He who listens too often to whisperings of the "spirits" may find his angels to be demons in disguise. I know personally many lives that have been hopelessly ruined by dabbings in the mediumistic arts. Humanity understands but imperfectly the mysterious forces dwelling in the borderland between the living and the dead. Until man understands more, he should leave alone these forces which may lead only to madness.²⁶

These words, written on mediumship and spiritism, also apply to channeling. In all cases, channeling represents a subliminal pathway to subjugating one's mind to another agency, and does not lead to self-mastery and unfoldment which is universally described by sages as the preparation for spiritual awakening.

This is not to say that channeling and the information gained thereby have not been beneficial to some people. And it is clear that impressive feats occur in trance states, such as the knowledge of events that may occur miles away in space and time. But there are significant differences between the practices and mental states involved in channeling versus those leading to revelation.

Channeling involves switching channels on the television set we already have; it does not require building a better television set by self-mastery and regeneration. Moreover the practice of channeling requires almost no effort at all for individuals who are more easily hypnotised or are more susceptible to auto suggestive practices. As subliminal experiences, mediumism and channeling require no effort to evolve the mind.

In contrast the kundalini paradigm affirms that enlightenment and revelation are the target of the evolution of consciousness. The experience of illumination and revelation--the communication of a higher intelligence--depends on first building a better television set, to be "re-born" at every level of one's being, but fully awakening and nurturing the evolutionary energy to completely remold the human system. The illuminated state of consciousness "is a surpassing state of awareness which transcends both the conscious and the subconscious mind of the normal human being, revealing the universe in a new light never experienced before."²⁷ Revelation depends on the activation of a supersensory organ of perception which is more or less dormant in the normal human being. It is the supersensory organ of perception which empowers the integrated human personality to perceive and commune with a higher intelligence, in a trance of complete spiritual consciousness. "The ultimate state of Yoga [and all authentic spiritual disciplines] is a state of equipoise and calm, of stillness and beatitude brought about by a tremendously enhanced awareness which

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soars beyond the regions fed by the senses. It is not a semi-conscious but a superconscious state.²⁸ In this state of union, the sages and prophets "channel" the spark of the divine that is within us all; they are not vehicles for the manifestation of external entities or alternative personalities. Sages and prophets are awakened products of the mechanism of evolution; their experience does not proceed from subliminal trance exercises. Nor are the geniuses channelers in the sense of the New Age connotation. They have a direct, unmediated communication with the universal mind through the agency of an organ of superphysical perception. This is what Sri Aurobindo meant when he replied to a disciple's query: "What you call thinking I never do. I see or I don't see. That is all."²⁹

For a person to function as a medium or a channel, it's necessary to relinquish the will and intellect: this allows the person to become a vehicle for the expression of alternative personality (whether this personality is an aspect of one's unconscious or an external entity is immaterial). However, the temporary negation of the faculties of will and reason, for the semi-conscious expression of an alternative personality, may have a detrimental impact on the development of the personality. With regular practice over a sustained period, the negation becomes more difficult to control, because the faculty which does the controlling is blunted and atrophied. However, "The object of the evolutionary processes is to release the self-conscious mind more and more from the thralldom of the subconscious to enable it to reach levels of cognition which, in its present state, it can never reach. This process of release is considerably retarded when the conscious mind fails to assert itself and tamely submits to the dictates of the subconscious"³⁰ Eventually, all control may be lost, and the potential for self-mastery is diminished. From this perspective mediumism and channeling represent regressive states of mind.

If continued for prolonged periods on a mass scale, the effect of practices such as passive meditation and channeling may be regressive and anti-evolutionary. In Gopi Krishna's view, "the mental stagnancy that kept the once spiritually advanced peoples of India and other places tied to erroneous ideas and beliefs for centuries has been in some measure due to these negative and anti-evolutionary practices."³¹

In contrast to channeling, the evolutionary process requires a commitment of will. Spiritual evolution depends on an effort at self-mastery and ethical self-reform, as well as an effort to nurture, strengthen, and discipline the will, in the context of a balanced, moderate lifestyle full of adventure and recreation. By the perennial philosophy, our focus should not be on the psychic demonstrations of channeling, but on the government within ourselves of the Energy of Evolution, which is the Energy of Love. This includes developing harmony and compassion in our relationships.

The kundalini paradigm suggests concentration as the lever to accelerate evolution, not the descent to trance-like conditions. Whereas control of one's personality and conscious mind is relinquished during the manifestation of an alternative personality, the trend of evolution is toward the integration and individuation of the personality and an amplification of the perceptual and cognitive capacity of the conscious mind. "Spiritual evolution does not imply greater skill in penetrating to the below-the-surface regions of the human mind but in raising it to levels of perception which it never possessed before. It is to this enhanced perception of gifted minds that all human progress is due."³² It is significant that channeling has never produced a poem to rival Shakespeare or an idea to rival Einstein's " $E=mc^2$ ". The use of negative practices such as channeling, to reach the subconscious or to manifest "Masters" has never produced a great genius or an illumined seer.

To summarize: The kundalini paradigm affirms that the birthright of the future humanity is a refined sensory apparatus, capable of cognizing super-sensory levels of creation, with all the powers of will, reason, and intuition intact and magnified. Intuition, inspiration, and revelation differ only in degree of insight, but channeling is qualitatively different. Mediumistic channeling depends primarily on subliminal exercises to express powers from the lower unconscious regions of the mind. Revelation results from a state of union with the Cosmic Mind, preceding from the activity of a supersensory organ of perception, which is active to a greater or lesser degree in all instances of inspiration. The state of superconsciousness is the target of evolutionary transformation that can be achieved by specific disciplines aimed at self-mastery and regeneration of the whole being--body, mind, and soul.

These claims on the evolutionary nature of inspiration and revelation are asserted so that they may be put to the test in the laboratory setting of a research project, to disprove or confirm the hypothesis. As a preliminary step in such a project, it should be possible to confirm elements of the paradigm through documentary research. If the claims have universal applicability, we propose that support for them should be found in a cross-cultural review of literature relating to prophecy, wisdom, and revelation, as well as relating to historical examples of the phenomena.

¹Aldous Huxley, The Perennial Philosophy. New York, Harper and Row, 1944. p. ix

²The concept of a directive force guiding evolution toward purposeful developments not ascribable to chance mutations is consistent with recent critiques and extensions of Neo-Darwinism. Cf. Taylor, Hiching, and Weissacher's work in Gopi Krishna, The Biological Basis of Religion and Genius. New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1971.

³James Jeans, The Mysterious Universe. Cambridge, Eng., 1931.

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⁴Gopi Krishna, op. cit., p. 46

⁵Gopi Krishna, Kundalini: The Evolutionary Energy in Man. Boulder and London: Shambhala, 1971. pp. 105-8

⁶Gopi Krishna, The Biological Basis of Religion and Genius. p. 42-3.

⁷Gopi Krishna, The Awakening of Kundalini. New York, N.Y.: Dutton, 1975. p. 111

⁸Gopi Krishna, The Evolutionary Energy in Man. p. 109.

⁹Alex Wayman, The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism. New York, N.Y.: Samuel Weiser, 1973. p. 172

¹⁰Frank Waters, Mexico Mystique. Chicago, Ill: Swallow Press, 1975. pp. 9-11

¹¹Gene Kieffer, "The Alchemical Marriage and the Risen Christ". Kundalini: A Magazine of International Spiritual and Scientific Progress. New Delhi, Vol. IV, No. 2., 1980

¹²Gopi Krishna, The Secret of Yoga. London, Eng.: Turnstone Books, 1973. Cf. work by Avalon, Eliade, and Klostermaier.

¹³Gopi Krishna, A Vision of the Future. New Delhi: Kundalini Research and Publication Trust, 1978. p. 9

¹⁴Gopi Krishna, Yoga: A Vision of Its Future. New Delhi, Kundalini Research and Publication Trust: 1978. p. 3, p. 7.

¹⁵Frank Waters, Book of the Hopi. New York, N.Y.: Viking Press, 1963. p. 9

¹⁶Gopi Krishna, The Awakening of Kundalini. New York, N.Y.: Dutton, 1975 and The Secret of Yoga.

¹⁷Pitrim A. Sorokin, The Ways and Powers of Love. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1954.

¹⁸Lord Maynard Keynes, Newton: The Man in the "Newton Tercentenary Celebrations" of the Royal Society, Cambridge, Eng.: The University Press, 1947.

¹⁹Gopi Krishna, The Awakening of Kundalini. p. 44

²⁰Ibid., p. 46, p. 56.

²¹Gopi Krishna, The Secret of Yoga. p. 80

²²Jon Klimo, Channeling: Investigations on Receiving Information from Paranormal Sources. Los Angeles, Ca: Jeremy Tarcher, 1987

²³Ibid., p. 48

²⁴Ibid., p. 143

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²⁵Manley P. Hall, Questions and Answers: Fundamentals of the Esoteric Sciences. Los Angeles, CA: The Philosophical Research society, 1965. pp. 249-50.

²⁶Ibid., p. 95

²⁷Gopi Krishna, The Awakening of Kundalini. New York, N.Y.: E.P. Dutton, 1975.

²⁸Ibid., p. 55

²⁹Amaury de Riencourt, The Eye of Shiva: Eastern Mysticism and Science. New York, NY: William Morrow, 1981. p. 190.

³⁰Gopi Krishna, The Awakening of Kundalini. New York, N.Y.: E.P. Dutton, p. 59

³¹Ibid., p. 58

³²Ibid., p. 60

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BEYOND CONFLICT: FREUD, JUNG, OR KUNDALINI

Bonnie Nack

The author describes a spontaneous paranormal experience which occurred to her in a psychotherapy session over 20 years ago. She analyzes the experience from both a Freudian and a Jungian perspective and then in terms of the raising of kundalini energy. She concludes that kundalini theory reduces conflict between the other two approaches and she discusses congruence between kundalini theory and Christianity.

This paper contains a description of a paranormal experience that happened to me twenty-seven years ago. After describing the experience, I will analyze it from the perspective of Freudian, Jungian, and kundalini theories. However, before describing the experience, I will discuss the biological and emotional contexts in which it occurred.

This paranormal experience occurred approximately one month after I had given birth to my second child. The first was delivered fifteen months earlier, and at the time of the incident I was nursing my second baby. During pregnancy, estrogen and progesterone increase a thousandfold, and then after birth abruptly drop to normal or even below. Breast feeding is also accompanied by major hormonal changes. Hence we may conclude that at the time of this incident, my body was undergoing tremendous activity and change in the sexual sphere.

The emotional stressors at this time were even more intense. Transforming a girl into a mother is one of the greatest achievements of nature, especially in modern times when young women are encouraged to pursue narcissistic and self-centered goals. I was one of these women. Changing diapers and cleaning up vomitus are the greatest assault to narcissism. For me, what made this assault even more powerful was the fact that my husband, also a narcissistic person, escaped the assault to his values and personality structure. When I turned to him for emotional support to raise our babies, I recognized to my great shock the shallowness of the man I had married. My parents were deceased and my extended family was scattered and uninvolved. I became desperate.

I began to yearn deeply for loving support and understanding. The yearnings were so great they were incapacitating. Juxtaposed to this yearning was a strong rage, which at the time, I thought caused my body to vibrate intensely. I realize now that these vibrations were due to changes occurring in my body, and not merely due to anger.

Like many people experiencing a life crisis, I was seeing a psychiatrist. He was compassionate and understanding as I poured out my yearnings and anger. It was during a regularly scheduled session that the paranormal experience occurred.

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When I entered the waiting room I felt strange, not like myself. Lying on his couch I heard my voice say with conviction, "I'm going to give birth to baby truth but there is no hospital so I will have to build one." He evidently did not know what to make of this so he took me to another psychiatrist in the same building where I repeated the statement, with the same conviction. I suppose they decided I was having an encapsulated delusion that was harmless and would disappear with the appropriate medication. He led me back to his office.'

Before I lay on the couch again, I noticed the light coming in the office window. I told myself there was a difference between man-made light and natural light, and each has its purpose. I noticed that his windows were dirty which reduced the amount of natural light that entered his office. This seemed important.

Immediately after I lay on the couch I experienced a strong surge of energy in my lower abdomen. I told the psychiatrist and he asked me to describe it. "It's greater than an orgasm but less than a birth contraction." In retrospect, I do not believe it was a physical sensation. It seemed to be separate from the body itself but within the space occupied by my abdomen. I was confused as to whether this feeling was related to giving birth or being inseminated.

I found myself sitting up facing the psychiatrist who was seated to the side and behind my head. I have no recollection of changing the position of my body. I looked at his face. Superimposed on his face was an ethereal skull in shades of gray. I screamed out loud in fear and turned my head away.

"What was it?" he demanded in a firm voice. "The face of death," I cried. "A skull." "Look again", he commanded. I suppressed my fear and turned to look again. There, instead of the gray skull was the face of Christ, gray and ethereal also. "What do you see?" he demanded again. "The face of Christ," I answered. The fear disappeared.

Again, I have no recollection of the transition to another position. I found myself on my knees at the psychiatrist's feet. The words I spoke came automatically from some deep place out of reach of my normal consciousness. "You wish me to eat the bread and drink the seed." At that moment a great heat came up from the center of my back into my head. Simultaneously I turned away from the psychiatrist and felt a deep dry heave wrack my body to expel nothing.

Again, I have no recollection of the transition. The next thing I knew we were standing up facing each other. The automatic voice from deep within my body said, "My father died when I was twelve; my mother died when I became of age. I want to get into you."

The psychiatrist responded by asking, "Do you mean onto me?" No doubt he interpreted this statement sexually. The

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voice did not reply. Instead to my surprise, I floated out of my body to glide so easily into his body. I remember having once thought that if I got into the psychiatrist's body I would have his knowledge, but I had never critically examined the idea. Now, this consciousness that I call "I" floated out of my body above a small gray cloud that emerged from my abdomen. To my great surprise, I did not stay inside his body. I passed through it and kept floating upward and forward, out the door of his office (which was closed), and up towards the ceiling corner of the waiting room. I felt frightened and shocked!

Again, the transitional bridge is not remembered. My next awareness I had was looking at the psychiatrist. My body was on the office floor and he had his ear to my chest as if he were listening for a heartbeat. He seemed upset. When he realized I was conscious he regained his composure and shouted at me: "You can't have everything you want."

I do not recall rising to a standing position; but standing, I checked my clothing to see if it was disarranged because I felt as if I had been inseminated and was pregnant. My clothing and body secretions confirmed there had been no physical sexual contact, but the strong belief that I had been inseminated and was pregnant persisted.

The automatic voice said to the psychiatrist, "You are Joseph and I am Mary." You are the sun and the moon, and I am earth. My hands formed a cup under my chin and I believed that for a moment the psychiatrist had a vision of a rose and a face fused into incredible beauty. I did not ask what he saw; I seemed to know.

The next thing I knew, the psychiatrist was making me a sandwich and we were waiting for my husband to come to take me home. I was confused as to whether or not I was actually pregnant, and told my husband this on the way home. I was also deeply confused as to the relative importance of the symbolic world within and the real world without. I knew they interpenetrated each other and were inseparable. This confusion persisted for several days.

"There is no difference between the symbol and the thing," the inner voice told me, "just all the difference in the world which isn't very much." At one point I realized that the ultimate truth about reality was so simple that to say it would break its unity, if indeed there was a word to describe All. "All is nothing. Nothing is All." I could not understand what the inner voice was telling me. "The oldest truths, the newest. The oldest truths, the truest." Something I did not understand was known since ancient times. What? I was hopelessly confused. The intense yearning continued.

When one afternoon in a dimly lit room while I was standing still all kinesthetic sensation from my body totally ceased. There was nothing but blackness. I cannot say that this blackness was around me, because--except for

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the act of perception--there was no "me." In the blackness a small dot of white light appeared. It began a downward trajectory leaving a thin line of white light in the darkness. It circumscribed a circle slowly, and when the circle was completed normal consciousness returned. I took a few more steps and again all kinesthetic sensation stopped; and the darkness and the dot of light appeared again. There was deep and total silence. This time the light inscribed a line, both ends extending in opposite directions simultaneously, becoming more delicate and faint as they extended themselves. When they were very delicate and extended approximately a foot apart, the darkness and the light disappeared, and normal consciousness returned.

It was at this moment that I realized that whatever was occurring within my consciousness was going too far for me to handle, and I was in danger of getting lost in a vastness I did not comprehend. I knew that I must return to my normal consciousness. To this end I knew it was necessary to focus my consciousness strongly in the external world. I informed my husband that we were going to throw a party for, in his words, "one hundred of our most intimate friends." The responsibility was healing as I anticipated that it would be and the intrusions into my consciousness disappeared. When I sought to continue therapy with my former psychiatrist, he refused to see me again, pleading illness.

Through social connections and influence a prominent Freudian analyst accepted me as a patient. Much to her credit she gave me no psychotropic medication; and during three years of treatment she spoke very little...also much to her credit.

Subsequently, I divorced my husband, and as a single parent raised my children while studying for a doctorate in psychology. Then I studied symbolism, altered states of consciousness, underwent various body therapies, and most recently homeopathic treatment, always seeking to grow into understanding of the life changing experience described above. I am still seeking twenty-seven years later, and still learning and growing from the seeking. This paper is an attempt to share some of the things I am learning.

A FREUDIAN INTERPRETATION OF MY EXPERIENCE. At the time of this experience, and during the years I studied psychology, Freudian theory was the most prominent and powerful theory of understanding the human psyche within Western culture. Within that theory and the medical model related to it, I would have been diagnosed as having a post-partum psychosis. Nowadays the nomenclature has changed, and the diagnosis would be brief reactive psychosis.¹ The out-of-body experience, the disappearance of my body sensations, seeing faces and dots of light would all be termed hallucinations. I might have been labelled "schizophrenic". The periodic rages I experienced towards significant authority figures would be diagnosed as paranoid, explosive, or P.M.S., depending upon the psychiatrist making the diagnosis.

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From the point of view of Freudian theory my symptoms were due to hormonal changes and an identity crisis combined. Psychodynamically I would be thought to be expressing infantile orality in my confusion of the breast and the penis. My preoccupation with insemination, pregnancy, and the Virgin Mary would suggest that I wanted to incorporate an idealized mother and have incestuous relations with my father. The hallucinations of a skull and Christ would indicate religious delusions and the death instinct.

The basic premise of Freudian theory is that instincts and their sublimation form the basis of all human behavior. If you accept these premises, you can accept the theory that logically derives from them. What is more, my personal history supports the Freudian interpretation. I was a premature baby and I spent the first month of life in an incubator. I was fed on schedule and not on demand. These facts and later deprivations of adequate mothering can be used to support the theory of frustrated infantile orality. I married a man older than myself and idealized him in an immature way. This could be used to support Freudian theories of incestuous striving.

According to the Freudian system of logic, I was seriously psychiatrically diseased. It is a tightly reasoned, logical, and coherent system, self-fulfilling and selfsustaining. One psychiatrist told me that I would have to be in treatment the rest of my life.

A JUNGIAN INTERPRETATION. Jungians believe that Freudians make a mistake when they reduce the psychic symbols to a mere expression of the reproductive and survival instincts. Jung's background in archaeology and anthropology led him to an awareness that primitive forces within the human psyche are not isolated individual instincts, but rather that they are collective and shared aspects of the human condition. Therefore, instead of building a theory based on isolated individual phenomena, his theory is based on the premise that we are dealing with deep forces that form structural patterns in the collective unconscious. In other words, his basic premise was different from Freud's and therefore the derivatives are different. He believed that these unconscious forces were myth-making, and termed these forms "archetypes". He affirmed these archetypes were universal and found within all cultures and religions.

Symbols and archetypes are multifaceted living images, and their meanings can be conceptualized in various ways. In this paper the symbols of the paranormal experience were discussed above in terms of Freudian theory. Now I will briefly discuss the same symbols in terms of the theory of Jungian archetypes.²

The skull can be understood as symbolizing the intellectual process as well as death and destruction. Christ is the principle of spiritual rebirth. Bread is the staff of life or spiritual nourishment. Seed is something that grows beyond what is visible and evident to the senses. Eating

and drinking are accepted ways of speaking about spiritual nourishment. In Christianity we symbolically eat and drink the body and blood of Christ in the ritual of the Mass. The sun is a symbol of universal life or God, and the moon its reflection. The rose is a symbol of purity and eternal love. Light is a symbol of wisdom or truth beyond that which is consciously known. A circle is a symbol of wholeness or the All. A moving line describes time and space. A line whose ends grow further apart, a symbol of polarity.

I have just condensed volumes into a few sentences obliterating the richness of these symbols. However, I wish to concentrate on the most confusing symbolism contained in the experience: that of the pregnant virgin. I felt I had been inseminated and was pregnant, and yet I identified with the Virgin Mary. How could this make sense?

In his book The Virgin Archetype, John Layard, a Jungian, discusses the concept of the pregnant virgin.³ He states that virginity symbolizes the purity of the unconscious. The conscious mind of a woman may be influenced by man-made laws, mores, and beliefs. But the unconscious may remain uninfluenced and uncontaminated. Such a woman is described as a spiritual virgin. Layard goes on to explain that symbolically such women are pregnant virgins because their unconscious is pure, and therefore the emotional integrity which prompts their actions is unconfused. In other words their motives are beyond a masculine comprehension. Layard states that for a woman to fulfill their roles as a wife and mother with satisfaction and success, she must be a pregnant virgin at the unconscious level.

At one point during the paranormal experience, the automatic voice said, "You wish me to eat the bread and drink the seed". Then my body was wracked with a dry heave as if to expel something. This could be understood as my unconscious symbolically purging itself of the man-made laws, mores, and beliefs, in order to re-establish its purity. Becoming a pregnant virgin was the transformation I so desperately needed to become a mother for my children. From a Jungian perspective, this paranormal experience was a healing experience, and not a psychiatric disease.

If archetypes are the property of the collective unconscious of humanity, it is possible that my personal experience was a manifestation of the collective unconscious. In other words, both the symbol of the pregnant virgin and the violent rejection of man-made laws and beliefs may be a manifestation of an archetypal pattern within the modern day collective unconscious that has been activated and underlies the women's movement which is causing changes in the lives of men and women all over the world.

Although there is much more that could be written within the framework of Freudian and Jungian analysis of the experience, I will turn now to an analysis in terms of the theory of kundalini.

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KUNDALINI THEORY. Both Freudian and Jungian interpretations organized and arranged the data of the paranormal experience according to systems known and widely accepted in the Western world. The fact that there was great stimulation to the sexual system, that there were sensations of vibrations, and that heat ascended the spine and went up over the top of my head, qualifies this experience to be examined from the point of view of an Eastern theoretical system: Kundalini.

In his The Mythic Image Joseph Campbell discusses Kundalini theory.⁴ Kundalini refers to an energy force that, as it rises up along side the spine, activates unconscious energies in seven energy centers called "chakras". The lowest center is at the base of the spine, the highest at the top of the skull. As each of these seven centers is activated, the individual adopts a different perspective on reality.

When kundalini energy is focussed at the lowest center, the world view of the individual is governed by hard facts and security needs. The personality is reactive, and uncreative. The second center is at the level of the genitals. When kundalini energy is focused at this level the primary motivation of the individual is sensual. Everything is interpreted compulsively as symbolic of sexual themes. At these lower two levels Freud was not incorrect. Kundalini theory affirms the importance of these two centers, but lets the energies pass through them to be transformed at the next higher level. At the third center, the energy turns into what could be called the Adlerian "will to power". Everything, including sex, becomes a part of a need to control another person.

Campbell explains that these lower levels are man's mode of living in the world in a naive state. During most of the history of mankind, people have functioned only at these three levels and their behavior has had to be controlled by religious beliefs and man-made laws and mores. However, when kundalini activates the fourth center, which is located at the level of the heart, there is an awakening of the consciousness to the possibility of another order of existence. At this level, survival, sexual needs, and power needs are no longer the motivating forces in life.

Yogic symbols for this level are God's Phallus called the lingam and the skull. These symbols were discussed earlier in this paper within the Jungian theory of archetypes. The similarity of the symbols of the two theories suggests that Jungian theory reflects the fourth level of consciousness. However, it is at this level where the meanings of symbols become more obscure because, as Campbell states, it is the place where the interior and exterior, the individual and the collective consciousness, begin to lose their boundaries and words begin to fail.⁵

At this level my confusion during the paranormal episode, between the symbolic and the real world becomes under-

standable. The statement, "There is no difference between the symbol and the thing, just all the difference in the world, which isn't very much" becomes decipherable. The interior and the exterior worlds were losing their boundaries.

Campbell also states that at the fourth level the consciousness that remembers the All is lost in sleep. This is the level that the practitioner of Kundalini Yoga wishes to penetrate while remaining conscious and awake.⁶ During the paranormal experience there were transitional periods for which I have no memory. It is possible that when the Kundalini energy penetrated the energy centers I was unable to remain conscious. This would explain the memory lapses. In addition, the statement, "All is nothing. Nothing is All." can now be understood as the nearest I could verbalize the knowledge of the fourth level, a knowledge that my consciousness was not strong enough to assimilate.

Another way to determine if this paranormal experience was precipitated by the rising of kundalini is to compare the sequence of spoken symbols to the successive energy centers. In the first episode I experienced a concern about birth and insemination. This would be appropriate at the central level where sexual themes predominate. The next symbolic utterance concerned the Christ and a skull. This could be seen as the ultimate power struggle appropriate for the third energy center. The next symbolic utterance concerned the conflict of consciousness as to its submission to God or to man, appropriate to the fourth energy center. The dry heave and the statement about eating and drinking bread and seed could reflect the fifth level which relates to the giving and receiving of spiritual nourishment.

Simultaneously with the dry heave the heat rose up from the middle of my back over the top of my head. The last utterance had to do with the sun and the moon. Campbell states that at the top level is the "marriage chamber of the sun and the moon," the place where the consciousness experiences union with God.

We may conclude that the sequence of spoken symbols during the paranormal event is what would be expected if it reflected the rising of kundalini up the spine. The symbols are Western rather than Eastern, again, as is to be expected. This conclusion is further supported by the fact that the energy in each center is polarized, and the symbols express this polarization.

Joseph Campbell states there is one simple test whether or not kundalini is actually aroused. When it is aroused intense heat is felt at that spot. When it leaves the part, that part becomes cold and lifeless. When the kundalini has reached the upper brain, he continues, the whole body becomes cold and corpse-like.⁷ We need only to recall the upset of the psychiatrist as he listened for a heartbeat in my body what had fallen to his office floor, to surmise that my body became corpse-like after the heat (as well as I) had

left it.

Kundalini theory states that some Yogis are able to leave their bodies via the energy center located at the top of the head. Because I was looking down at the little gray cloud that also left my body, we must assume my consciousness left the body via the head.

There are a few loose ends to tie up before we leave the kundalini analysis. Recall the face and the rose fused to reveal incredible beauty. Campbell states that when kundalini penetrates the fourth energy center the "mother light" is seen. The whole desire of the individual becomes to know God. He describes the desire as being like a lover's yearning to be with the beloved, and refers to Dante's description of his feelings of being overwhelmed the moment when he first saw the beauty of Beatrice to describe the effect of kundalini when it activates the heart center. With this in mind we begin to suspect that the intense yearnings described at the beginning of this paper are related to the awakening of kundalini.

We have one last phenomenon to discuss: the loss of kinesthetic feedback from my body, the darkness and the dot of light inscribing a circle and then a line. Hindu mythology describes the mother goddess entering into the field of time and space as a dot of light.⁸ Yogic texts frequently describe consciousness without a body.

Recently I met a spiritualist who suggested that the ethereal gray face of Christ and the skull were formed from ectoplasm that had been generated by my body, perhaps during the abdominal contraction. Alden Kardac in his classic work on mediums states that people sometimes have spontaneous mediumistic experiences.⁹ Inasmuch as the fourth level is the level of consciousness at which psychic experiences occur, this last analysis of the paranormal experience does not conflict with kundalini theory.

DISCUSSION. This paper illustrates that there are a variety of theories within which to attempt to understand alterations in human consciousness. At lower levels of consciousness arguments arise as to which theory is correct. Within kundalini theory these conflicts disappear because the understanding becomes comprehensive enough to encompass what before seemed to be contradictory points of view. Freudian, Jungian, and other theories of understanding the human psyche can now be seen to have a logical relationship to each other within the more comprehensive theory of kundalini. Kundalini theory therefore can help both the professions and the public to begin to think in the integrative and comprehensive manner characteristic of the fourth level of consciousness. This is the level where different points of view begin to blend into a unity that is beyond conflict. It is the next step in the evolution of human consciousness.

As I said above, the first statement that the automatic

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voice made was, "I am going to give birth to baby truth but there is no hospital, so I will have to build one." A limited and personal way to interpret that statement is to say that I had to build a hospital within my own consciousness to hold and nurture the infant symbolic and mythic truths that were born into it twenty-seven years ago. This interpretation is correct. However, there is another way to interpret the statement. It may be heard as the voice of the collective unconscious saying, "We are going to give birth to the truth, and we must build within the collective consciousness of our time an understanding that is hospital to the truth, the truth that was built into the foundation of the world. Twenty-seven years ago the automatic voice said, "The oldest truths the newest."

¹Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 3rd ed. Wash., DC: American Psychiatric Assn, 1980. p. 200

²G.A. Gaskell, Dictionary of all Scriptures and Myths. New York, NY: 1979

³John Layard, The Virgin Archetype. Zurich, Switzerland: Spring Publications, 1972. pp. 306-307

⁴Joseph Campbell, The Mythic Image. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press. 1975 pp. 330-380

⁵Ibid., p. 362

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 333

⁸Joseph Campbell. The Power of Myth. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1988. p. 48

⁹Allan Kardec, The Book of Mediums or Guide for Mediums and Invocators. New York, NY: Weiser, 1979

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PARADOX AND KUNDALINI

Susan Claire Haske

The kundalini process may bring "enlightenment," but an individual needs to have new understanding of the natural order of life. It would be helpful to have a willingness to accept paradox, for the kundalini awakening can expose one to paradoxical experiences pertaining to contradictions between sensory experiences and academically acceptable information. A self-report approach is given to illustrate possible kundalini related paradoxical experiences.

The ancient hypothesis of evolutionary energy lying dormant or actively rising from the Kundalini power center in each human being offers a potential framework for study of unlimited human potential. Scriptural descriptions and personal interpretations report that activation of kundalini is a step on the spiritual path toward enlightenment and peace.¹ Psychic gifts, genius capabilities, and unity with broadened consciousness have been hypothesized as part of the evolutionary process. The kundalini energy is hypothesized to be neutral with the experienced positive or negative impact depending, in part, upon each individual's level of moral development. Kundalini is hypothesized to represent a natural biological process.

MAKING A PERSONAL DISCOVERY. Currently I perceive a spontaneous process fitting the description of kundalini active within me. Awareness of major perceptual and conceptual changes occurred in sequence with two years of multiple isolating events. I hypothesize that abrupt and intense loss of material possessions and relationships in a short time may have enhanced both a loss of resistance to intuitive behavior and a varying reactance to my former habit patterns allowing me to risk exploring different dimensions of life.² Within this physical impedance analogy, my reported physical sensations, psychic developments, paranormal experiences, personality changes, interpersonal reactions, and other manifestations can be interpreted to be consistent with the kundalini hypothesis. Within this evolutionary model, my case study data may offer unique insights into health care considerations for others who follow the same path.

The perceived kundalini process-related experiences in my daily life represent a dimension of reality to me because I allow them to alter my life patterns. Repeated observation of heightened altruistic outcomes of intuitive thoughts and actions gives me personal evidence supporting continued submission to perceived broad-visioned guidance. Over the past three years, I have become a believer in an interconnecting superstructure, unlimited human potentials, unseen teachers, and evolutionary paths. Awareness of intuitive moral guidance seems available to me whenever I choose to listen. I struggle daily with conscious will, desire for

moral advancement, and evaluation of submission to perceived creativity rather than to creations.

SHARING A DISCOVERY. Enthusiastic reception greets many a new discovery as potentials are assessed. As each individual tries, incorporates or discards the discovery, the enthusiasm may remain or caution may take its place. As I openly share information on kundalini and the process I seem to be undergoing, I have found that peer responses can range from awe, intense interest, and magical delight to bewilderment, disbelief, and anger depending upon the individual listener's cultural experiences, educational experiences, and inner beliefs. Some individuals begin with a shock reaction and seem to demonstrate passage through crisis adaptation states before they can even debate the potential outcomes of the hypothesized kundalini awakening (mental illness or transcendence).

Within the framework of human evolution, I interpret my paranormal perceptions as benchmarks indicating that I have found and am learning how to be aware of functioning within another dimension of life. For many months of becoming aware of these previously unseen life dimensions, I felt like the aboriginal who discovered the coke bottle in the movie "The Gods Must Be Crazy". I recognized something new, hoped it was good, and knew it was not going to fit in easily with my traditional academic lifestyle.

INTEGRATING A NEW TOOL. Some individuals have cautioned that it may be dangerous to pursue evolution without a visible teacher. With all due respect to those learned men and women who make this suggestion, I feel a great need for self-reliance in health care selection. Some of my suspicions of being led falsely may have evolved from my university training as an audiologist. When I was a student I learned that all deaf individuals should learn to speak and not use sign language. Paradoxically, in my first job I was met by a room full of successful signing adults. This professional conflict of experience with previous academic training has taught me to listen to the consumer and work within his or her belief system.

I have chosen to believe that I am integrating broadened perspectives in my life decisions. To test this evolutionary hypothesis within myself, I have committed myself to the practice of my highest ideals "even if it hurts." Over the past three years I have consciously risked my health, family and peer relationships, financial and employment security, in my determined effort to let my higher nature lead. I believe the major personality traits I have enhanced in my spiritual integration process are trust in the ruling intelligence, dedication to moral growth, and delight in helping others. Commitment to these perceived rules fits easily within my moral code although I currently perceive a "bumpy ride" each time a conscious desire seems thwarted by perceived broadened consciousness. With any new tool, however, I expect trials may be required to gain ease and ability and ease of mind in application

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Hypothetically, kundalini awakening can drop an unprepared individual into a vast realm of incomprehensible experiences relating to contradictions between sensory perceptions and academically accepted information (e.g., light visualization). Doubt may enter when the experiences cannot be confirmed. Stress may enter even the best intentioned individual when action outcomes vary from day to day.

Hypothetically, the kundalini process will help an individual stretch his or her mind so that multiple, ever changing perceptions can be considered. An illustration of such multidimensional relativity is definitive of the center of our solar system. We visually perceive movement of the sun across the sky; yet academically we can demonstrate that the earth moves around the sun. Broadened metaphorically in spiritual terms, we may each be a sun/son and the world of the senses may revolve around our creative visualization. In a more physical view, possibly correlated with functioning at the level of the base chakra, the universe may seem to revolve around our bank account rather than any of the above! Weller humorously illustrates some of these notions in his listing of geocentric, heliocentric, egocentric, and ethnocentric theories of the solar system.³

Evolutionary processes may help us cope with paradoxical relativity in all life matters. In order to expand our perception of truth in this manner, we may need to practice accepting alternative viewpoints. Willingness to accept paradox is one of Ellis' characteristics of a master university student.⁴ Willingness to search for meaning rather than absurdity in opposites also may be preliminary training to holding broadened consciousness within the mind. Hypothetically, through the kundalini process, the mind can be opened to unlimited possibilities and an individual can break out of the seeming cement pathways our life routines may build.

FREE WILL. In evolving cultures we are free to view life from any dimensions we choose as long as we do not interfere with the path of another. One multidimensional life area currently of intense consumer and professional interest is exploring health options. Review of conference programs such as that for the 1989 joint meeting of the Canadian Holistic Nurses Assn. and the Canadian Holistic Medical Assn. documents such interest in understanding and using the "power of the mind to both cause and cure illness." In relation to the kundalini hypothesis, both health and illness need to be perceived within dimensions that as yet are scientifically unseen and intangible.

AN EXAMPLE OF OPPOSING HEALTH CHOICES BASED ON POSSIBLY COMMON SYMPTOMS. A recent article in my home city newspaper highlighted some perceptions of a diagnosed female schizophrenic:

Waves of intense vibrations bombarded her,
terrorized her,. Invisible forces taunted her,

touched her, raped her in her bed...(The patient recalls) "I used to sit reading my Bible for hours, to make my thought good and honest".⁵

This schizophrenic young woman also perceived world invasion by extraterrestrials. She was hospitalized, placed on prescribed drugs, and nearly lost custody of her children. Reportedly she believes that her disease is permanent and that she will remain on drugs all of her life.

Three years ago, some of my extraordinary perceptions appeared very similar to those reported in the above news paper description of the woman diagnosed as schizophrenic. I sought psychiatric counselling for what I perceived as "spirit problems". I struggled with the psychiatrist's recommendations and I chose not to be hospitalized or to take prescribed drugs. I made my risky choice for evolution rather than for illness in the belief that if I was undergoing spiritual awakening both hospitalization and prescribed drugs might be detrimental. To relieve my distress and counter my noncompliance with medical advice, I turned to positive affirmations, alternative healers, prayer, meditation, and selected reading.⁶ Now I can reflect in the manner of Dale Carnegie: "If you have a lemon, you can choose to make lemonade."

EVALUATION THROUGH CREATIVE GROWTH. I have chosen to believe that kundalini energy or its equivalent is surging throughout my body, communicating with me and directing me toward a state of peaceful, creative unity with my environment. On February 26, 1989 I lay in bed and felt like a living coffee percolator. It seemed as if each of the major areas I associate with the seven major chakras were pulsating harmoniously. This was the first time I had felt this integration of vibration from the base of my spine through to the top of my head. On May 23, 1989 I lay in bed and heard church bells in my head. I wondered if I was hearing the sound of a chakra or a cosmic sound. At some level I feel both of these were important occasions worthy of great celebration. In my mind these benchmarks help me realize that I am walking simultaneously in the place of sensation and in the place of broadened consciousness.

Through my experience with the process I currently call kundalini I feel it becomes continuously easier to see broad visioned unity of purpose, to accept and applaud my place in the harmony of life and to replace personal desire, worry, and fear with trust in a guiding intelligence. I see these personal developments as evolutionary for me and characteristic of unlimited potential of creative thought. Ervin Lazlo has said:

Grand evolutionary syntheses remain products of the intellect, fascinating but abstract possibilities unless the processes and products they describe can be tested and verified in the empirical realms of observation.⁷

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By breaking stagnant behavioral pathways, guided kundalini energy hypothetically releases our creative potential. About eight years ago, I remember telling a colleague that I had met all my life goals. My purpose and function in life were defined at that time relative to my family and job. These responsibilities remain important but evolution has entered as a driving new purpose in life function. I perceive this conscious pursuit and development as healthy and productive within my life path. I also think I can begin demonstrating its effects academically within the parameters of creativity models.

Hypothetically, the kundalini energy is correlated with continuous creative change. As each individual reaches for and is guided to the level of divinity of the highest Creator, the individual is said to acquire reflected and enhanced abilities. Academically, creativity has been defined by Sternberg as an "elusive psychological attribute" which is being studied and modeled at an "intersection between...intelligence, cognitive style, and personality/motivation."⁸ Artistically, Torrance suggests creativity is analogous to "shaking hands with tomorrow" and he suggests that we can "plug in [to our environment] for more energy." Both these artistic and academic definitions of creativity fit well into a model based on integration with broadened consciousness.⁹

As data for this paper I have chosen to present examples of my own recently perceived creative growth within the levels of creativity suggested by Taylor as cited in Torrance.¹⁰

1. EXPRESSIVE CREATIVITY. Personal growth in this area of spontaneous creativity can be illustrated by an example incident of perceived levitation. The incident occurred during the spring of 1989 while I was on my way home from a walk. I was tired and I think I muttered something to this effect. Immediately I felt the right side of my body begin to lift off the ground. I felt as if I was being given a supportive lift under my right armpit. I chuckled, and said "thank you" to whatever was giving me a "helping hand" and reported that I thought I could make it on my own. The pressure and lift under my armpit dissolved, I looked around in embarrassment and walked home. Although the event was not observed by others, I was certain of its spiritual benchmark implications as it was a totally unplanned event.

2. PRODUCTIVE CREATIVITY. A repeated example of creativity developing in a structured situation involves my recent willingness to open a previously unread text, intuitively turn to a page and obtain insight on how the presented information can be used as core material for a creative paper I am writing. Over time, if such "inspiration and direction" continue to prove valuable, the process will make creative writing much more efficient.

3. INVENTIVE CREATIVITY. My newly acquired development of creative tools seems to follow stages of initial cogni-

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tive frustration in trying to solve a daily living problem. I find that intuitive guidance now leads me in steps to purchase and use materials in ways I have been unfamiliar within--e.g., use of garbage bag insets and garden netting for partial fencing for my pets. Intuitive placement of materials also has been found to solve perceived pet eating and toileting problems.

4. INNOVATIVE CREATIVITY. I believe that "improvement thought modification involving conceptualizing skills" has developed within me through perceived learning of a new language, a perceived multidimensional communication system with broadened consciousness. Academically, Hakuta suggests that a conceptual expansion can occur in bilingualism.¹¹

In my daily life, I assume every action and thought have meaning. If an error occurs in a memo I am typing, I now suspect that either the content or the timing of the memo may in error. Likewise, if my filing cabinet seems particularly hard to lock when I am putting my purse away, I take out my purse and reflect on the possibility that it contains something that I need at that moment. Through this perceived new communication system with broadened consciousness, I find resource to previously unknown sources of strength, growth, guidance, and peace of mind.

5. EMERGENATIVE CREATIVITY. The kundalini energy process itself offers one of the rare frameworks within which "there is an entirely new principle or assumption around which new schools, movements, and the like can flourish."

In working through the kundalini process, a central question that needs to be asked is how courageous will an individual be. Creativity may depend upon the courage to do something different, to explore and seek new pathways. If we are to evolve, we may need to go beyond fear of losing a particular job, a particular set of friends, or the security of one viewpoint.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION. Under evolutionary hypotheses such as kundalini, humans may be defined as energy systems attempting to integrate with our environment. Actions and reactions may follow natural laws and moral growth hypothetically may be equivalent to comprehending such laws. Through raising awareness of the action potentials surrounding each of us, active energies and guiding intelligences hypothetically can present us continuously with opportunity to evolve within the universe.

An example in this area of moral to physical energy transfer is the responsive chain of productive energy that Davis suggests may be released when we give an individual a needed gift. By watching the positive energy release, Davis feels blockages may be released and the individual may be allowed to continue the journey.¹² Recognition of any good deed as a natural energy reaction may be a necessary step to achieving the balance of personal synthesis.

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With my own experience over the past three years, I find I am continuously guided to practice to the limit the moral principles I learned as a child. Previously I had some suspicion that this moral code should be followed, but now I view active application as the solitary peaceful way of solving the problems of humanity.

Kundalini is a process of personal evolution through which universal synthesis is hypothesized. In my perceived experience with the kundalini process, seeming acute or chronic discomforts become accepted as necessary steps in personal reorganization. Individual desires are given up to altruistic purpose. Improvement in self becomes recognized as contribution to rule by a broader scheme. Do we organize, direct, and synthesize our lives individually? Academic formats for discussion of broader schemes are available.¹³

FUTURE DIRECTION. At present my conscious goal may be equivalent to that of the Master Omraam Mikhael Aïvionhov when he said"

...we shall have a share in the life of everything nature contains: the earth, plants, animals, even the stars and the power of the living Spirit within us will be increased and intensified...¹⁴

Juncture of purpose with evolutionary advancement and observational confirmation is my current hope.

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³T. Weller, Science Made Stupid. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1985. p. 14

⁴D.B. Ellis, Becoming a Master Student. Rapid City, SD: College Survival, Inc. Fifth Edition.

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⁷Ervin Lazlo, Evolution: The Grand Synthesis. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, 1987

⁸R.J. Sternberg, "A Three-Facet Model of Creativity" in The Nature of Creativity ed. by R.J. Sternberg. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1988

⁹E.P. Torrance, "Creativity as Manifest in Testing" in Sternberg, Op. Cit.

¹⁰I.R. Taylor, "The Nature of the Creative Product" in Torrance, Op. Cit.

¹¹K. Hakuta, Mirror of Language: The Debate on Bilingualism. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1986

¹²P.B. Davis, "A Personal Account of Kundalinic Awakening Experiences During the Past Decade." Academy of Religion and Psychical Research. Proceedings of 1988 Annual Conference. Also personal communication from Davis.

¹³Lazlo, Op. Cit.

¹⁴O. M. Aivanhov, The Living Book of Nature. Laval, Quebec, Canada: Prosveta, Inc., 1984. p. 20.

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IS THE KUNDALINI A POISONOUS SNAKE?

Helen McMahan

While some kundalini disciplines awaken kundalini energy and also devolve upon one paranormal powers, neither a complete kundalini awakening nor acquisition of these powers is the ideal goal. The focus should be on the process of ennoblement, of cultivation of wisdom and love to extract the venom of the kundalini serpent.

Is the kundalini a poisonous snake? The symbol of the snake abounds in many cultures of mankind's history. It is the snake coiled at the base of the spine who offers the fruit of knowledge of Eve in the Garden of Eden. Full of mystery, power, and danger is this symbol and we humans have looked upon the actual life-form we name "snake" with a combination of fear and fascination.

I have the good fortune to be a member of a group of people who have been studying the kundalini under the direction of Genevieve Lewis Paulson for almost a decade. We have evolved into a spiritual family with unshakable bonds of love for one another. At our last meeting we were discussing the miraculous powers described in our Western Bible, one of which is the "handling of poisonous snakes." Genevieve led us all in a meditation upon these miraculous powers or "Siddhis" (as the Indian Yogis call them), and we were called upon to share which of the powers interested us the most and also which one was of least interest to us. The majority of the group found that the "handling of poisonous snakes" was the least interesting "Siddhi." Why in the world would one want to handle poisonous snakes anyway? A rather useless power, we surmised. Genevieve consequently decided to lead us in a meditation upon the energy of the snake and why such a "Siddhi" might be of interest and importance. In the aftermath and sharing of that meditation, my sister laughed and posed the question: "Is the kundalini that poisonous snake?" Our entire group broke up into gales of laughter and, in that moment, the title of this paper was born. Indeed, one of the "siddhis" of our Judeo-Christian Bible, our Western spiritual heritage, is the handling of poisonous snakes, and I believe this paranormal power symbolically refers to the handling of the powerful and dangerous energy of the ancient Indian Yogis named kundalini.

In this paper, I should like to do two things: (1) share with you my belief that by synthesizing different varieties of truth which mankind has learned during the course of evolution, namely the Indian yogic philosophy and tradition with the Judeo-Christian religious philosophy of ennoblement, we can learn to minimize the danger of the kundalini force; and (2) discuss the way in which subjective meditative practices can put each of us in touch with the kundalini energy existent within our system.

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The kundalini releases into our systems a layer at a time and is constantly pushing us toward our birthright which is the ultimate blending of ourselves with the divine, or said otherwise, the awakening of our consciousness to the fact that we are indeed part of the divine energy. At the last kundalini conference sponsored by this Academy, some of the members asked, "What practices should we be doing in order to awaken this powerful kundalini energy? In other words, now that we have been talking about this wondrous, magical force within us, how in the world can we "get at it?" No one had any suggestions to offer at that time as to what series of practices or disciplines would guarantee the full arousal of the kundalini. Actually, we must realize that a complete kundalini awakening is not the only goal. The aim of our focus, it seems, should be upon the process of being, the process of ennoblement, that process of bringing up into awareness the workings of this incredibly intelligent and inexorable force within us. In like fashion, the acquisition of the "Siddhis," those paranormal powers promised in the ancient Sutras of the Indian philosophy of Yoga as well as in our Western Judeo-Christian Bible, is also not the only goal. The kundalini is said to bring to mankind attributes of omniscience and omnipotence, yet at the same time, the writings of the ancient philosophies warn us of great dangers inherent in their acquisition. Allusions to suffering, death, emotional, and mental perversion, insanity, evil intent bringing enormous moral damage not only to one's self but to entire groups of people are made about the gifts of this power named "kundalini." We are enjoined to believe, to pray, to work to make the material machine that we possess as strong, flexible, controlled, and healthy as possible, but never become distracted by the stunning and magical gifts which may occur along the way.

These warnings are well-founded, yet these gifts and their acquisition, seem to me, to be just as much a part of our birthright as human beings as any spiritual enlightenment. The ancient literature warns us to suppress or ignore these magical capacities but from a viewpoint that our development is still unfolding, that as a species, we continue to evolve, "these powers and perfections...can, if we so choose, be seen not as hindrances to awakening, but as the limbs and organs of our future nature."¹ We must, however, cultivate them with wisdom and courage in order to make these powers health-giving, life-enhancing, and not mere curiosities or gross pathologies. There is great need for balance. These emergent supernatural capacities by themselves are no guarantee of lasting goodness or wisdom. As a matter of fact, certain kinds of supernormality, practiced without charity, have produced destructive, even monstrous behavior. Consider the terrible world-wide destruction of the Second World War. Hitler doubtless possessed enormous kundalini energy; it is certainly believed that he had psychic powers. We do know that the man had enormous power and a captivating charisma. But the gifts of this man brought the entire world to the brink of destruction. If, however, such power and such knowledge were to be balanced with an enlightened consciousness--a heartfulness, love, empathy,

ago-old wisdom, what changes could such an individual bring about upon our planet and within our race? The Western New Testament of the Bible describes beautifully how such an individual changed the course of destiny of our entire world.

What should we do? How should we regard this force and these paranormal gifts? There is no holding back of this emerging force we call "kundalini." It is an autonomous process arising out of the unconscious and apparently using the human individual as a vehicle resulting in a transmutative process. A new consciousness is emerging within our race which is superseding "rational consciousness" with its rigid left-brain orientation to life. This kundalini is our evolutionary mechanism, ceaselessly active in developing the brain towards a pre-determined state of higher consciousness. Its arousal is inevitable and its gifts are both marvelous and fraught with danger. We actually have no choice but to learn as much as is possible about this force, how it is operating and open ourselves to all the health-giving, life-enhancing aspects of its energy. But how do we focus upon the life-enhancing aspects to avoid the dangers of this kundalini serpent? One way which makes sense to me as an individual produced by the Western culture of mankind's evolution is to blend the two traditions of the Indian philosophy of Yoga and the Judeo-Christian ethic. The Yogic philosophy describes a force which brings me attributes of omnipotence and omniscience; the Judeo-Christian ethic speaks of cultivating the divine attributes of wisdom and love. By synthesizing these two traditions, I begin to understand the dance of Shakti, the kundalini force, the Shiva, the force of divine spirit. During the process of blending these attributes, I really begin to understand my origins, ultimate meanings, and the mind and heart of God while, at the same time, I can mitigate somewhat the frightful danger inherent within this evolutionary leap of mankind. Such a synthesis creates a quantum leap of evolutionary growth which I believe is occurring with human consciousness at the present moment of our species' history.

By working consciously with the already available kundalini energy within our systems, we can train ourselves to master these new energies. By mastering, I mean that we can learn to co-create, aid the process of channeling and cleansing which the kundalini energy is attempting to do within our systems. We can learn how this energy is working within us by focusing our consciousness upon the major chakras, the vortices of energy, within our beings. Within a meditative state, we begin to sense the truths of our own beings opening ourselves to the vast regions of our subconscious; in symbolic form, we can begin to learn from the messages of our deepest selves.

(Editor's note: What immediately follows is the instruction in meditation Ms. MacMahan gave to the participants at the 1989 ARPR Conference.)

Is the Kundalini a Poisonous Snake?

I would like this morning to share with you a couple of exercises which demonstrate the power of consciously altering one's state of awareness. The first exercise is modeled upon one from Robert Masters and Jean Houston's Mind Games. I find that it is an excellent way for us to get in touch with the power of focused consciousness and the quick and easy way in which we can transform our very experience of ourselves. Mr. Roberts and Ms. Houston suggest that mind games such as the one I am about to describe can be "utilized to cleanse the doors of perception, to restore the capacity for experiencing with something like the full potentials of the various senses."² Allow yourself to relax, releasing tension in your necks and shoulders; feeling more and more comfortable. Breathe deeply and feel yourself descending within, going deeply within, aware of breathing and stillness, deeper and deeper into yourself. Next, gently open your eyes and look down at one of your hands resting upon your lap. Gaze at this hand with intense interest, examining it with a sharpened focused awareness. But examine this hand as if it were a curious-looking object, not really a hand, certainly not your hand. Just a thing of interest. Perceive this hand as not even belonging to you. Certainly, it cannot feel anything; it is simply an object within the focus of your awareness. As you examine this lifeless thing which is a hand, begin to explore it with your other hand. Allow yourself to feel this object, its texture, shape, spaces. Run the fingers of your other hand all over this interesting but lifeless object you have found lying in your lap. As you explore this detached object with the tactile sense of your other hand, let your eyes close momentarily so you can simply experience what your sense of touch has to teach you about this curious-looking lifeless object. Now place this object, hand, back upon your lap and opening your eyes once again to look at it, begin to direct a current of energy from the center of your body out through the arm into this lifeless detached object called "hand." With all your concentration, let this current of energy and your consciousness pour into this hand. Feel now that this formerly lifeless object is beginning to fill with your conscious awareness and is beginning to feel very, very sensitive. As you continue to focus your stream of consciousness into this hand, you begin to sense an enormous sensitivity enter the hand. And this sensitivity grows more and more acute as you continue to breathe and to direct your total concentration into this, your hand. Soon you begin to feel sensation in this hand. You begin to sense vibrations; the tactile sensation of the clothing beneath this hand is becoming so intense now that you are beginning to feel that your hand is reading the textures as if it could see them as well as touch them. These incredible feelings within this hand are so wondrous, so intense, that you are beginning to experience them sensually, you are beginning to experience such pleasure with this hand. You are totally focused upon this sensuous, sensitized hand and are fascinated by the acuteness with which it now can feel, and hear, and see its environment. So fascinated that you are eager to explore even more with this utterly conscious hand.

So now I invite you to explore your neighbor's fully conscious hand. Turning to the person seated next to you, place the palms of these vitally sensitive hands together and intertwine your fingers. Close your eyes so that you may each become one-pointed in the focus of your conscious awareness upon your intertwined sensitive hands. Allow yourself to sink into the sensing of your neighbor's hand, feel its energy, welcome it into your being and allow the energy of your sensitized hand to flow into your neighbor's being, knowing as you do so that the same sensations, the same perceptions you are experiencing are being simultaneously felt by your neighbor. Breathe deeply, feeling, perceiving, sensing, sharing. And then gently and slowly allow your hands to draw apart and separate returning your own hand to your lap. Take a long conscious breath and bring yourself back to ordinary consciousness. Open your eyes.

Now in a fashion akin to this experience of raising the consciousness within your hands, and experiencing a very intense sensation of touch and extraordinary awareness, you can focus awareness within your body and begin to sense the moving force of kundalini. This force is an amazingly intelligent process which moves through each of our beings in a totally unique fashion healing, cleansing, refining, and bringing to fruition the promise of our race's evolutionary thrust. There are described in the ancient literature seven major focuses of this energy which are called chakras, literally translated as "wheels" or vortices of energy. These seven areas are indeed related to the major nerve plexuses which arise within our spinal cord and spill outward to the fronts of our physical forms. We can focus our intent awareness upon each of these several centers and begin to bring up to the level of consciousness what work kundalini is doing at the present time within our systems. Know that this force is uniquely human, specifically earthly, and that it brings us human beings those extraordinary gifts we call "paranormal." These gifts of power and knowledge called "Siddhis" in the ancient Indian texts range from overcoming the force of gravity to foretelling future events, reading minds, making oneself invisible, to actually changing the course of destiny by neutralizing existing tendencies within the world and introducing new ones.

Very similar gifts are described in our Western Judeo-Christian Bible and are usually referred to as "miracles." These range from levitation to prophesy, walking upon water, instantaneous healing to actually changing the course of destiny through the magic of Christ-love. We humans are heir to these gifts. Through ancient meditative techniques of exploring our unique evolutionary force called "kundalini", we build knowledge and power. By directing the aim of our energies to the sublime attributes of wisdom and love through the expansion of consciousness to the spiritual ground of existence as extolled within our Western religious-philosophical tradition, we minimize the dangers of the kundalini force without relinquishing our inheritance of the paranormal gifts of our race.

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I would like you now to experience a short kundalini exercise so that you may begin to sense for yourself how much a method of consciously focusing upon various energy centers within your own systems can bring you into a conscious contact with your own kundalini flow. In similar fashion to the exercise we just did of intently focusing our consciousness upon our hands and thereby acutely raising the energy level and sensitivity of that hand, we will now focus upon three of the major chakras or energy centers, and attempt to discover a bit of what is going on within our unique cosmos. Although there are, as most of you know, seven major centers described in the ancient literature I would like you to focus only on three, because of lack of time and also because of the unusual forum within which we attempt to do a meditative exercise.

Begin simply by straightening your spine, closing your eyes, and relaxing yourself deeply into your own breath. Watch your breath and sense its rhythm. Allow yourself to fall deeper and deeper into the ebb and flow of your slowing, deepening breath. Enter into your intricate fascinating multi-layered system, which is your being--physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Allow yourself to glimpse the awesome vastness which is you. And now begin to direct that conscious awareness to the small of your back, right there at your spine. Breathe to it, let your mind ramble, release your expectations and perceive "the elegant pathway of private thought stretching ahead, shimmering with light."³ Bring your focus of awareness up now from the small of your back and direct it out of the front of your body about half-way between your pubic bone and your navel. This is the sexual vortex, the energy center of your most creative, playful, and powerful sexual energy. Imagine that you are directly a current of energy from the small of your back up through the front of your body and out of this specific area there between the pubic bone and the navel. Begin to sense the quality of this energy. Do not force anything, do not expect anything; simply breathe. focus, sense.

I would like now to invite you to ask yourself while you remain deeply focused into the flow of your creative, playful, powerful sexual chakra in what way you are presently using this energy to ennoble yourself, to lift yourself to the highest and holiest level you can perceive. And as you ask yourself this question, simply relax and sense your energy, watch your mind and imagination create pictures and colors, be attentive to any words which may swim across your consciousness. And let yourself remember from Corinthians: "Surely you know that you are God's temple, where the Spirit of God dwells. Anyone who destroys God's temple will himself be destroyed by God, because the temple of God is holy; and that temple you are."⁴

Still breathing and deeply sunk into yourself now, let that energy flow subside and return your awareness back to your spine at the small of your back. Maintain an erect spine and a very relaxed and comfortable feeling within your

body. Again with your imagination and focused awareness begin to draw a bead, a current of energy up from the small of your back and out through the energy center in the middle of your chest, your center of loving compassion, your heart center. Begin to sense the quality of this energy. Again, do not force nor expect. Focus, imagine, sense. Be very much aware of what you sense of the quality of your loving heart.

Again, I invite you to ask yourself in what way you are presently using the energy of this compassionate heart to ennoble yourself, to lift your being to the wisest, most caring level of which you can conceive. Watch now as your being attempts to answer with pictures, colors, words, perhaps sensations. Be attentive without strain. There is no winning or losing, right or wrong--"The pendulum of the mind oscillates between sense and nonsense, not between right and wrong."⁵ Bring to your consciousness now from Colossians: "To crown all, there must be love, to bind all together and complete the whole. Let Christ's peace be arbiter in your hearts; to his peace you were called as members of a single body."⁶

And once more, eyes still closed, breathing evenly, move your focus of awareness back to the small of your back at the spine. And move this energy, up now through the spine all the way to the very top of your head, to that highest vortex of energy, the crown chakra. This is the place of your body which was the fontanelle, the spot which was soft and unclosed when you were infant. Direct the flow of your energy up and out of your body in this area of your crown. This is the spiritual chakra, the very highest vortex of energy within our system. Relax and imagine the flow of your energy all the way up your spine and out of your body through the crown chakra at the top of your head. Within the flow of this energy, sense the quality of your spirit.

I invite you to ask yourself in what way you are presently using the energy of your highest center, your spiritual chakra, to ennoble yourself. Let yourself dissolve into the swirling answers of pictures, colors, perhaps words or sensations. Notice the sense of how you may be ennobling yourself spiritually swim to the surface of your conscious awareness without any pushing or pressing concerns of ego. Into the flow of your spiritual chakra, place the words from Ephesians, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive, by the power which is at work among us, to him be glory..."⁷

Begin now to imagine that incredible and inevitable dance of Shakti and Shiva just over your head. Imagine your spiritual energy, the kundalini force flowing through the spiritual crown chakra, now blending with the divine energy which is always around us. See the swirling dancing spiral of these energies mixing just over your head. And then open yourself to the blend by allowing some of this mixture of spiritual and divine to come back into your being through the crown chakra and flow gently down, down to your heart.

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Let every heart beat send forth this blend of energies to every cell within you. And also allow some of this mixture of spiritual and divine dancing just over your head to separate and flow down over the sides of your body like a shower of light healing you, blessing you, and bringing you peace.

Bring yourself back now, breathe very deeply and gently, stretch yourself as if you would pull your selves back together. Yawn, wiggle shoulders, stretch out your neck, blink your eyes and come back. Take a few minutes to reorient yourself and return to your normal reality. Let yourself remember the sensing of the quality of these energies; if you did experience something which seems translatable, do make a few notes to yourself. This information can be useful and helpful to you and will lift your self-awareness of the evolutionary force working within your being to a new level of efficiency and efficacy.

CONCLUSION. Is the kundalini a poisonous snake? Yes, I believe so. Poisonous is, by definition, that which can injure or kill, cause illness or death, a substance which is harmful or destructive to happiness or welfare. The inexorable flow of evolutionary energy can indeed be harmful or destructive to happiness or welfare. This flow of energy ceaselessly active in developing the brain and body of men to develop into a superman capable of prodigious spiritual, mental, and physical feats certainly can and does cause harm. Yet by focusing our aim consciously upon the sublime attributes of wisdom and love, I believe we extract the venom of the kundalini serpent while we absorb and integrate the great gifts this Goddess, this personified holder of evolutionary energies, has to give.

¹Michael Murphy, "The Future of the Body" an interview by Keith Thompson. Yoga Journal. May/June, 1989. Issue 86.

²Robert Masters and Jean Huston, Mind Games. New York, NY: Bell Publishing Co., 1972. p. 42

³Bessie Haed, A Question of Power. London, Eng.: Heinemann Education Books, Ltd., 1974. p. 206.

⁴The New English Bible, Oxford University Press, Cambridge
I Corinthians:3: 16, 17

⁵Carl G. Jung, Memories, Dreams and Reflections. Ed. by Aniela Jaffe, tr. by Clara Wiliinston. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1965. p. 154

⁶Colossians 3: 14-15

⁷Ephesians 3: 20-21

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KUNDALINI, SEX AND YOGA

Robert L. Peck and Thelma M. Peck

A series of disciplines (without any religious or institutional overtures) selected from several ancient systems of yoga were given to a group of average middle class Americans and the effects were studied over a ten year period. The results of their conscientious practice indicate significant physiological, psychological, and paranormal changes as ascribed in the ancient tantric writings to an activated hidden force of kundalini.

We live in Eastern Connecticut, and together with a group of middle class, professional adults from that area have been exploring Eastern practices for many years. We started this work over 10 years ago when we were asked to teach an American version of Transcendental Meditation in local institutions and to explore other Eastern practices. So we began an advanced program designed not only to discuss various spiritual philosophies but to try out various practices and to evaluate them. It was a cooperative venture in which the students agreed to experiment and evaluate, and we agreed to lead and coordinate the effort, at no monetary cost. It seemed like a good bargain to all, and the group has proved remarkably stable.

We adopted Yoga as our primary vehicle because we believed that it was based on a system which lent itself to trial and verification. Our examination led us to believe that Yoga was probably the first scientific study of higher consciousness (in contrast with modern studies of "normalcy"). Looking at the yogic tradition, it appears that the early scientists studied the leaders in their society and discovered some common traits which correlated with increased consciousness or talent. They studied these traits, classified them, and outlined a system of increasing and controlling them. To this day yogis are attempting to put that ancient system into practice. In the intervening centuries, the original findings were elaborated and covered over by various religious and political institutions with biases of their own. It was part of our challenge to uncover the underlying truth. The literature investigation was relatively simple. Where we found similarities between writings/cultures and when our experience validated them, we said, "This is basic and we will keep it." Where we found disagreements with our experience or between writers or cultures, we discarded them for the moment, considering them to be either dogmatic or cultural. For example, there was the word "tapas". Early in our studies we found that our experiences disagreed strongly with virtually all the modern interpretations of this ancient Sanskrit word when applied to disciplines. "Tapas" is a prominent Eastern religious term and is as basic to Hinduism as "Faith" is to Christianity. Thus, Patanjali states that: "Perfection is obtained by trusting in God, maintaining an awareness of the inner self,

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trusting in God, maintaining an awareness of the inner self, and with 'Tapas'." So "Tapas" is obviously very important, but what is it? Every text that we read interpreted tapas when applied to self discipline as "religious austerities" or "mortifications" which in practice become religious asceticism, worship or obedience. But when we looked at the original Sanskrit, the root of the word was "to burn", akin to the English "fervor" or "zeal" whose roots also mean "to burn". Fervor is not unfamiliar to anyone on the spiritual path. It is certainly part of our Christian heritage. St. Paul advised his followers to be hot or cold, but not lukewarm. One interesting and related question we had wondered about, having been raised as Methodists, was, "What is the method of the methodists?" We finally surmised that it must be injecting fervor into each moment, because we found an article about John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, and his diary, in which he not only detailed his activities down to quarter hours, but also coded each entry to indicate the amount of fervor he felt.

Heat is an integral part of many disciplines. The alchemical process of transmuting gross energy to a higher form requires heat. Tibetan yoga uses visualizations to a great extent, many of which deal with an inner fire and finally, the sensation of a burning heat is usually experienced within increased kundalini. All of this heat is, however, the result of practices, not a practice in itself. So when the question of tapas as a practice arose we settled on the interpretation that the practicing tapas is the equivalent of the 18th and 19th century fervor. This led to translating Patanjali's statement as, "A Yogi should live, trusting in a highest power, knowing the inner self and with fervor in all his/her endeavors." We can compare this translation with modern Indian interpretations which generally run something like: "Yoga is mortification of self, chanting mantras, and resignation to the Lord." The term "chanting mantras" is a modern translation of the word "svadhyaya" which we translate as inner awareness since "sva-" can mean self; "dyha-" can mean meditation; and "-ya" means doing.

Another major discovery in our research came when we became aware that the ancients had a more complete knowledge of human sexuality than does our modern high tech society. This discovery was initiated by questioning the usage of strongly feminine nomenclature to describe the sexual region in men. For instance, a lower energy center is described as "yoni" or vagina, "the lower mouth," the "feminine opening," or an "inner penis" which one assumes must be within an inner vagina. Further, the writings are very descriptive specifying the depth of the yoni (four fingers) and the location which corresponds to the location of the vagina in women. The writings teach about pressure, concentration and muscle tensioning of the yoni, which women can immediately relate to sexually; however, this literature was directed to men. Researching this question led us to a whole new understanding of sexuality and the potential androgynous capacity of both men and women.

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I need to say a few words here about androgyny, since the concept of androgyny has been denigrated in our masculine culture. Today androgyny is usually seen as a cultist "unisex" term which implies a conforming individual or a "wimp" in the present vernacular. Our conditioning cannot conceive that a person can be more powerful, creative or a leader of men if feminine sexuality is allowed to be integrated with the masculine. To the ancients a person was incomplete, mortal, limited, a sleep walker and weak without that integration of both sexual forces. Hopefully, our research gives some evidence that the ancients were correct and, more importantly, will lead others toward this rediscovered route to perfection.

In the beginning, as we encountered the ancient dichotomy of universal forces, which were usually called the feminine and the masculine forces, I wanted to give them more sexually neutral names. My conditioning associated feminine force with female and vice versa. However, it soon became apparent that the ancient philosophies were based upon inner sexual sensations of both forces which I could experience within my own body. It was a shock to me and the group to realize how societal training and conditioning had limited our sexual experiences to a mainly masculine type orgasm and cut us off from a complete awareness of both ourselves and the outer world.

When one can experience sexual stimulations and reactions as separate and individual, one can then understand the reasoning behind the old duality of masculine and feminine forces in the world. The feminine sexual response puts one in touch with the basic physiology of the body, its energies, and the pure joy of experiencing. The masculine urge is goal oriented, toward mastery, control, and creation. With this insight one can then identify the athletic jock as being an expression of almost pure conditioned feminine energy while the petite young woman advocating feminism exhibits masculine force as she attempts to change the world. Our distorted view and limited experience of sexuality has produced other problems as well. For instance, in reaction to this conference, many people confuse the wonderful experience of free upward flowing feminine energy with kundalini. (Don't settle for that when there is so much more!)

Our modern minds can accept two universal natures intellectually, yet it is very difficult to accept two distinct sexual responses in ourselves which underlie those two universal forces. Alchemy, as well as various yoga systems around the world, appears to have been built upon a knowledge of two-modal aspect of human sexuality. It took our experimental group many years in preparation before we were able to work with sexuality, even though all the practices were pointing to it.

Our work has provided some definite proofs that the ancient sexual and philosophical models were based upon a true androgynous capability in men and women. By following

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the practices we uncovered, any man or woman can prove to themselves the veracity of the ancient physiological descriptions of sexuality, provided, however, they desire to do so within the proper environment. This requires letting go of much of one's societal conditioning, which may explain why so much of the discipline of yoga is concerned with overcoming conditioning.

Having overcome the hurdle of sexuality and applying tapas, the obvious next step in research led to finding and dusting off the ancient methods of individually stimulating the two sexual forces and bringing them under control. This then leads to the final step which is the integration and fusion of the two separate and powerful sexual forces into an evolutionary force which we call kundalini.

This paper defines "kundalini" as an inner vital energy behind individual evolution or the energy which can drive an individual to approach full potential.¹ It first appears in infants during their rapid evolution and reappears in adults as supranormal behavior. The physiological processes which generate it are assumed to be suppressed during later childhood in order to foster the normalization of socially responsive individuals and then to reappear in adulthood during moments of creativity, trauma, or intense emotions. Under these conditions unexpected and in many cases paranormal characteristics are exhibited.

From ancient times various schools of yoga, and by inference, alchemy, mysticism, and martial arts have claimed to offer techniques for stimulating this evolutionary kundalini energy for the perfection of their devotees.

In order to test these claims, the authors presented a wide range of the disciplines of yoga to a group of over 30 persons ranging in age from the 20's to the 70's and representing primarily the middle and professional segment of our New England culture. No money was exchanged on either side, the subjects agreeing to follow the disciplines and to report on the results in exchange for the classroom type presentations. Each individual in the study spends more than 30 minutes a day with the listed Practices and started with a mastery of the fundamentals of Astanga yoga or its equivalent which provide a necessary foundation.²

It has been found that many of the traditional individual exercises are worthless for direct stimulation of kundalini and that the ones which are of value must be syncretic with others. The functional disciplines have been found to be those which duplicate and strengthen the effects of the normal excitation of the body and mind when facing intense challenges in life. Some ancient yoga exercises, although functionally worthless, are found to be useful as models. For instance, one exercise describes pulling water up through a tube inserted in the anus.³ This is impossible but the attempt to do so leads one into an increased awareness of a series of unique muscle tensions which can assist in the raising of kundalini.

All of the major schools of yoga as well as most of the alchemical schools divide the stimulation and functioning of the body into two aspects called the masculine and the feminine.⁴ These aspects are present in every individual and should not be confused with the "male" and "female" entities. In general, the feminine aspect or force is concerned with the basic organic or life force involved in the functioning of our bodies, including the conditional functioning of the brain. The masculine aspect or force is concerned with the more abstract function of choosing goals, causing change, and includes the creative nature as well as the acquisitive and dominative proclivities of individuals. Most of the Chinese schools describe the masculine or yang force as expansive and creative and the feminine or yin force as contractive and nurturing.

It is difficult to stimulate the feminine energy of the body beyond what is required for immediate functioning unless the body is externally threatened, and then the energy flows in well established and conditioned outlets. In contrast the masculine force has no energy of its own, but can direct or allocate the flow of feminine energy into new channels. However it is readily suppressed by feminine conditioned mental responses such as musing, worries, or day dreams, or it can be trapped in judgment making. In our culture the masculine force seems to dominate because our society sees the allocator of resources as more powerful than the provider of resources. Our economy is based on "free choice" which implies management/direction of energy. Kundalini is neither of these forces, but a fusion of the two which becomes more powerful than the sum of the two.

The mystical practices allude to this fusion of the forces, but the writings are not explicit about the process. This is wise because the fusion process is not for those who are still developing ego and involvement in the outer world. It is reserved for those who have satisfied many desires, who have met challenges, but find a deepening thirst for something beyond the physical. It is then that the inward and more subtle development starts. Most of the yogic exercises deal with leading students to a new perspective on themselves and into an environment where there is a belief in a higher power and a deeply felt aspiration to find a union with it. Only within this setting are the advanced exercises which deal with the stimulation of kundalini properly taught.

When the basic feminine force is stimulated to provide energy great enough to power the process, and the creative masculine force is stimulated to direct the flow of the feminine energy into the right channels, a fusion process results synthesizing a different type of force called "kundalini". The reason that kundalini manifests so seldom is that the stimulation, direction, and fusion of the two forces is difficult to master.

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One serious problem in studying the methods of arousing kundalini is that the effects may take months to manifest once a proper exercise is initiated. The slow rate of mastery is attributed in large part to the process of overcoming prior conditioning from our society which suppresses the rise of the kundalini. The majority of the positive elements in the arousal procedures are or have been taboo in our society even though they are also recognized as elements of natural play in children. For instance children enjoy perineal pressure, holding or forcibly exhaling their breath, rocking and play with the genitalia, all of which are suppressed as soon as children become trainable. Meditation which is a fundamental discipline still remains taboo among most religious groups and even when practiced is seldom more than relaxation and withdrawal. Strong or deep exhalation is considered boorish, uncivilized and threatening in most of our society and many people relearn how to do it with great difficulty.

The strongest conditioning which stands as a bulwark against the rising of kundalini appears to be sexual. There are three aspects of our conditioning which have to be overcome if the following practices are to be mastered. The first is the idea that an individual is but one sex; the second is that sex is sinful and/or disgusting; and the third is that the feminine response is inferior. All three work to suppress any sexual experiences other than the socially encouraged and accepted masculine orgasm. By accepting the superiority of the masculine we have minimized perineal, vaginal, and nipple sensuality while enhancing the clitoral/penile responses. For instance, in our present culture the masculine orgasm is almost worshipped while the deep inner penetrating feminine climax of both sexes is denigrated. The missionary posture of coitus is encouraged since it forces the masculine response from both partners. One startling example is that many mothers in the study reported the deliberate suppression of nipple sensuality during nursing because it caused strong vaginal excitation which they interpreted as the beginning of incest for the child. India is not without corresponding conditioning. For example, the modern Indian pundit on kundalini, Gopi Krishna, writes about his first awareness of kundalini as, "I suddenly felt a sensation below the spine, at the place touching the seat ..."⁵ Our studies suggest that "the place touching the seat" was the "yoni" of yoga which corresponds to the vagina in women. It is nearly impossible for a man to describe feminine experiences in our masculine-centered world. To protect themselves from the feminine sensations men keep their anal and sexual muscles tightened, their abdomens pulled in and their buttocks tucked under, all of which are found to suppress the rising of kundalini.

The ancient writings are full of references to the perfection of androgyny which is repeated throughout the world's religions, myths, and folktales.⁶ The yogic writings refer to the feminine center by various names such as inner linga (penis)⁷ or kanda (bulb) as well as the yoni (vagina)⁸ or feminine mouth.⁷ Men who have managed to stretch their

muscles and ligaments sufficiently to sit cross legged on the floor for periods of time can find an inner opening corresponding to a primitive vagina located as the texts say, "behind a covering and four inches deep."⁸ The covering is the dermal outer layer of the perineum, concealing the yoni, which can be circumvented by entering at the edge of the scrotum. This primitive vagina is found to have the same neural and muscle responses as reported by women. Women on the other hand, find a difference in response to clitoral and vaginal stimulation. They report sensations from the clitoris which are comparable to that experienced by men in the tip of the penis. Much of the yogic advanced training speaks to be centered in learning to separately activate the two sexual responses and then to direct them away from the forward masculine orgasm and back toward the yoni where they can be combined within the lower abdomen as suggested in both the alchemical and tantric writings.⁹ It is probably an explanation for some of the alleged sexual activities of some of the early Christian and gnostic sects who certainly had access to the teachings of India at that time. For instance, the final verse of the Gospel of Thomas is very understandable in this context: "Every woman who will make herself masculine will enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

The following expression of the Practices is the result of years of dedicated experimentation by the subjects who reported and modified the various exercises taught to them. They reported positive results, in that these experiences helped them to new understanding of mystical writings and this left them hopeful of even greater attainment. The subjects varied greatly in the speed of their mastery of the various steps as well as in the magnitude of the many and varied benefits accruing from the efforts. There are strong side effects requiring constant correction; and the ancient warnings about the dangers of attempting to arouse the kundalini should not go unheeded for the isolated experimenter. Accordingly the following Practices are written in the ancient style using very brief statements in the same logic. The brief statement approach is a go/no-go situation based on the reader's understanding. If the reader does not understand the concepts, it can be understood that the reader is not mentally, psychologically, or physiologically ready to attempt that particular Practice.

For instance, Patanjali's statement that "Mastery of the subtle upward flowing energy leads to the separation of water, mud, thorns, and other sources of pain and discomfort." #40, Book 3) only has meaning if (1) the reader has experienced the upward flowing feminine energy and (2) has experienced the separation of pain from the inner self with the energy. If the reader has not experienced both phenomena then no amount of commentaries will be of any value. The Practices are written for those who have already developed some self control of the mind and body and will be worthless to someone who has not mastered the methods of relaxation, beginning meditation or fundamental breath control.

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The Practices are not an end in themselves, but merely a route to finding an inner control over the hidden kundalini energy. This is similar to actors and actresses who can cry, laugh, shake with fear, etc. by first remembering or turning on to the associated feelings. They then direct energy to activate the response. Since most persons have long forgotten any feelings associated with kundalini, the Practices lead one into the feelings step by step. Most people likewise have allowed the necessary muscles and neural responses to become inactive from long disuse and must be led almost muscle by muscle and nerve by nerve back into shape. Kundalini energy differs from the laughter or crying responses in that strong physical stimulation is required in addition to mental imaging. At the time of trauma this stimulation is obtained by the violent protective response of the feminine force activating the muscles of the body, but to achieve inner control it must be supplied by one or more of the basic yogic techniques.

PRACTICES:

1. Advanced Practices begin by mastering meditation with pressure on the perineum or muladhara.¹⁰
2. Meditation is relaxing the outer body while activating the lower abdominal internal energy and putting the mind in a superconscious state of readiness.¹¹
3. This is assisted by conscious exhalation of the lungs and effortless inhalation.¹¹
4. Exhalation must be so extensive that lower abdominal muscle involvement is noted.¹¹
5. The stomach lift or uddiyana bandha¹² is helpful in finding the yoni.
6. The exhalation and muscle involvement becomes subtle and vibrant.
7. By increasing the masculine force a state of alertness, like anticipating a catastrophe¹³ is reached.
8. The experience must be made pleasurable; with periods of dissolution.⁹
9. This is done by further relaxation of lower muscles allowing the groin to expand sideways like the yoni opening to an insertion.
10. Muscles in the middle abdomen or svadhisthana are excited.
11. This is done by visual imaging of an inner linga, letting it stimulate the upper end of the yoni or vice versa.⁹
12. Or by experiencing a rising and uncoiling snake called "kundalini."
13. This is facilitated by exciting the yoni with stimulation of the nipples.¹⁴
14. The lower abdominal muscles must churn.
15. This is done by forcing active coitus of the linga and yoni.⁹
16. Or by exciting the kundalini to dart and seek an upward opening.
17. Forcing the energy upward with jalandhara bandha is most useful.¹⁵

18. The abdominal muscles are made vibrant with subtle motions and exhalations. One constantly seeks a more intense pleasure.⁹

19. The experience is like being swept up in a maelstrom; the inner sound or nadam² is intensified.

20. The energy must be pulled or led upward by the ring of muscles around the svadhisthana.¹⁶

21. There must be total absence of mental deviations, or kleshas.

22. Any deviations of the mind produce loss. One must constantly strive.

23. The Practice is lost in the rising kundalini.

24. The kundalini is absorbed by increased fervor in life.

The exercises of yoga as presented by the popular schools are just that, exercises. The pranayams are taught to exercise the lungs, the asanas to exercise the muscles and the various meditations to exercise control of the mind. The actual power of the exercises is realized only when they are integrated. This is perhaps similar to a ballet school which concentrates on the individual positions and forgets the dance. A large number of people can teach and master individual ballet positions, but only a very small number of teachers and students are capable of dedicating themselves to the mastery of the much harder discipline of the dance.

As there is a difference between the positions of ballet and the dance, there is likewise a difference between the exercises of yoga and the stimulation of the kundalini. In both, there is the strong central concept of a vertical flow and stance as well as a goal. The goal or libretto of the ballet is to "express" an experience of life, whereas in the Practices it is to "experience" more and more or to "be" constantly more alive. If these masculine drives are lost during the performance, all that remains is a series of feminine mechanical motions.

There is an intuitive natural aspect in both the ballet and the Practices. An individual can become so involved in the goal or expression that the mind, body, and spirit become integrated in the dance or Practice. The body moves and responds naturally, gracefully and effectively even though no formal training has been given in the individual positions or exercises. An individual can dance expressing pure joy spontaneously or find the full potential of his life force in the fervor of response. It might be added, however, that if one has not prepared the body and mind the aftermath can be stiff and sore muscles or emotional and mental aberrations may result. It should also be obvious that an untrained person cannot perform on demand and is limited in responding to the demands of the outer world. A dancer is not made by one spontaneous dance perfectly executed any more than by the mechanical mastery of the formal positions.

The centering of the Practices on the abdomen is consistent with the experiences of the average person of the gut churning, tensioning, crampy feelings, upset, "butter-

flies", and sexual impulses following traumatic, ecstatic, highly expectant or emotionally demanding situations. The exhilaration of the body and mind with the stirring of sexual interests is embedded in our popular music. Modern biochemistry is well aware of the strong chemical changes in the body which are produced by the same forces that are manifested in lower abdominal changes. For instance, there is a great deal of data illustrating that laughter which involves the lower abdominal muscles is highly conducive to modifying the physiology of the body.¹⁷ The abdomen is known to pool the reserve blood of the body and to contain many of the regulatory organs of the body. The motion and tightening of specific muscles in the abdomen directly massages and stimulates the organs, various controlling ganglia as well as one of the master controllers, the hypothalamus, by means of a hydraulic connection through the spinal fluid. This merging of the feminine energy and the directing masculine force is described as "inner coitus" in the ancient writings. The actual experience correlated well with this model. Subjects report a clear sexual discharge during the Practices which is unlike normal procreative semen/lubricant and indicates some inner biochemical changes. Men also report no unexpected loss of semen yet may have the sensations of an inner directed ejaculation deep within their yoni which parallels the old descriptions of a semen flow.¹⁸ (It should also be pointed out that normal sexual capabilities are not diminished but rather enhanced in both men and women.)

Taking a cue from the ancient reports about the decreased response time of yogis in the martial arts, we tried the following experiment. We measured the time it took a group of subjects who kept their eyes closed to bring their hands from their sides and to clap them in response to the sound of a clap. The group doing the Practices had a response time of 0.17 second compared with the control group of school teachers who took 0.32 seconds to respond. A group of 12 and 13 years old students who were likewise measured was much faster than the control group but still slower than those using the Practices taking 0.24 seconds.¹⁹

Most subjects report an increase in the number of lucid dreams as well as an increase in paranormal experiences which are primarily related to increased knowledge and awareness of their lives and others. They report a strong sensation of union with others in the lower abdomen which is similar to the feelings of an inner coitus. Empathy for others is accompanied with strong sensations in the breast and nipples. Another reported change is the absence of boredom and an increase in fervor. Life does not become easier or less painful, rather it is more exciting, demanding and productive.

Another tangible validation is a book published by the subjects illustrating the increased ability to communicate abstract or spiritual insights described by the early writers. Over a two year period, while studying various spiritual teachings, each member of the group wrote aphorisms and/or parables which attempted to describe an under-

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standing of his/her own life in a spiritual context. These aphorisms and parables were collected, edited and illustrated by the group and published in 1988. Some samples follow:

One of Patanjali's aphorisms was paraphrased as, "In the physical world we see things as separate from us and do not know ourselves, In the spiritual world we know ourselves because we become the other."

The problem of evolution was expressed as, "There was no sin when Eve ate the apple. There was merely the virtue of disobedience."

Seek peace, you will find chaos. Seek knowledge you will find questions. Seek goodness, you will find strife. Seek meaning, you will find confusion. This is the path of evolution.

The problem of Truth was approached by, "Knowledge is a function of the present. Once it is recorded it becomes a belief and loses its value as knowledge. Wisdom is eternal. It cannot be recorded and its value lies in its application change.

This paper is an extract of a book now being prepared for publication. The authors wish to credit Leslie Ouimette of the Norwich, Connecticut Public Schools who tested the response time of teachers and students and Pat Luvara of the Naval Underwater System Center who reduced and analyzed the data. The authors honor all of the patient, dedicated individuals who participated in this experimental work and assisted in the preparation of this paper. A debt is acknowledged to the Kundalini Research Foundation, and in particular to Gene Kieffer who freely gave of his resources and time. Finally, there is a feeling of extreme gratitude and indebtedness to the ancient sages and rishis who conveyed their wisdom to this modern age from all who have participated in this work.

¹J. Woodrooffe, The Serpent Power. Ganesh, India, 19974; L. Silburn, Kundalini. Albany, NY: SUNY, 1988; G. Krishan, The Awakening of Kundalini. New York, NY: Dutton, 1975; Kundalini, Evolution, and Enlightenment, ed. by J. White. New York, NY: Anchor, 1979; A Bharati, The Tantric Tradition. New York, NY: Samuel Weiser, 1975.

²R. Peck, American Meditation. Personal Development Center, 1976.

³H. Reiker, The Yoga of Light. Dawn Horse, 1971. pp. 81-82.

⁴R. and T. Peck, The Stone of the Philosophers. Personal Development Center, 1988

⁵G. Kundalini for the New Age, ed. by Gene Kieffer. New York, NY: Bantam, 1988. p. 2 (Compare with kanda: reference 7)

⁶Sexual Archetypes: East and West. ed. by B. Gupta. New York, NY: Paragon House, 1987. pp. 17-20.

⁷Linga or penis: reference: (1) Woodroffe, Op. Cit. pp. 343-350
Kanda reference: Silburn, Op. Cit., pp. 72-73

⁸Woodroffe, Op. Cit., pp. 208, 210, 224, 326

⁹This intense imagery, which becomes real, uses the practice which Patanjali calls samyana (Book 3) which is the combination of concentration, meditation, and samadhi. Samana or feminine energy is then added to the masculine samyana for the union, coitus, or mauithuna. Continually increasing pleasure or "kama" is essential to the practices and one must avoid being static and "enjoying". Lu K'uan Yu, Taoist Yoga Alchemy and Immortality. New York, NY: Weiser, 1970. p.63; S. DeRola, Alchemy. Bounty Books, 1973. Woodroffe, Op. Cit., pp. 295-296; Silburn, Op. Cit., pp. 177-204, the Tantraloka verses (ignoring the commentary) can be read more intelligently as being sandhabhasa (Bharati, Chap. 6) language wherein the "external woman is actually the "inner" woman.

¹⁰ Lu K'uan Yu, Op. Cit., p. 132; Woodroffe, Op. Cit., p. 208

¹¹R. and T. Peck, The Handbook for Goats. Personal Development Center, 1985.

¹²Vishnoudevananda, Yoga Asanas. New York, NY: Weiser, 1956. pp. 148-149

¹³ This meditation is similar to the Zen practice of meditating while expecting to be struck with a stick at any moment.

¹⁴Woodroffe, Op. Cit., p. 194

¹⁵Reiker, Op. Cit., pp. 87, 95.

¹⁶Woodroffe, Op. Cit., pp. 206-207

¹⁷N. Cousins, Anatomy of an Illness. New York, NY: Norton, 1979; N. Cousins, "Healing and Laughter" University of Colorado Medical School, 1986; D. Liechty, "Humor and the Surgeon", Presidential address Western Surgical Assn, 1986, University of Colorado.

¹⁸Urdheva retas, or reverse flowing semen. Women also report sensations like an inner ejaculation and a sensation of "pulling" upward.

¹⁹The following table lists the time interval for the onset of clapping from the subjects and the duration of the claps (response time spread) for the three measured groups.

Practicers	0.17 seconds	0.11 seconds
7th grade students	0.24 "	0.14 "
Teachers	0.32 "	0.25

²⁰Unknown, The Book of Kapros. Personal Development Center, 1988

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KUNDALINI YOGA: THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN PARANORMAL PHENOMENA AND EXPANDED PERCEPTION*

Swami Padmananda and Linda Anne Seville

Within the science of yoga paranormal phenomena can be explained through the natural development of mind and consciousness. In yogic terms, sense perception occurs through the interaction of the mind and the senses. As the nature of the mind is clarified, one may find that these expanded perceptions lead to paranormal phenomena. The real issue seems to be whether these abilities are used for enhancement of the quality of life. The question is raised whether the expansion of perception directly underlies the phenomena we call "genius".

In the study of Kundalini Yoga as presented by Swami Rhadha in Kundalini Yoga for the West, the study of perception plays a major role. Our examination will use the principles of the Kundalini system to uncover the relationship between perception and paranormal phenomena. This system shows that anyone can pursue the goal of expanded perception, Higher Consciousness, and spiritual genius. It is the birthright of all human beings to attain their full potential as spiritual beings, if they are willing to put forth the effort.

We will begin our presentation with the investigation of perception itself and later relate it to paranormal phenomena. In our investigation we will look at common every day events to uncover the assumptions and factors that influence how we perceive. It takes courage to ask questions, to challenge the assumptions that we have been unwittingly operating on. But by doing this we uncover the true nature of perception and also recognize the possibility of developing a potential we never knew existed. This is the yogic method of self-discovery. Like the modern scientist who bases conclusions on scientific experimentation, the students of Yoga become their own laboratories. The five senses are the doors and windows to the world around us. We usually assume that what comes in through these doors and windows is an accurate perception of what is.

CAN WE ASSUME THAT OUR PERCEPTIONS ARE ACCURATE? In order to answer this question, we will look at some common experiences that everyone can recognize. For example, witnesses of an accident required to give testimony have very different interpretations of what actually happened. Another example is different members of a family recalling a past event, each from their own perspective. Often the memories are so different one would hardly recognize them as the same event. Just as the perceptions in the case of the accident are so different, the memories of the family event are only as good as the original perception of each member.

Using these two illustrations, we can see immediately that the accuracy of our perception is limited by the individual and personal quality of how we perceive in the mo-

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ment, as well as the increased distortion of the past through memory.

HAVING REALIZED THAT THERE ARE MANY FACTORS THAT LIMIT THE ACCURACY OF OUR PERCEPTION, WHAT WOULD BE THE BASIS FOR OUR BELIEF THAT THE SENSES CONVEY AN ACCURATE RECORD OF WHAT IS, AS DOES A CAMERA OR TAPE RECORDER? Often this belief is supported by instances of mutual agreement of what is perceived. In the case of the accident, everyone present agrees that there is an accident, or in the case of the family event, there can be common agreement that something did indeed happen. However, if we look deeper at perception, this agreement is found to be superficial. In fact, each person recalls very different aspects of the same incident. Therefore the understanding of what has been perceived will be very different.

Also, this issue of what constitutes accurate perception becomes even more confused when we consider that it is possible for us to take on the perception of another, even though we may not have seen the object ourselves. Most of us can recall instances of someone declaring emphatically that some object or person has been seen, or that some event has taken place, when we have no recollection of it. If the statement is strongly made, with emotion, we are likely to think we must be wrong. This agreement can lead to doubt of one's own perception--through the power of suggestion which comes from strong expression or a strong personality.

DO I EVER SEE THINGS THAT ARE NOT THERE? HOW MUCH DO I SEE OF WHAT IS REALLY THERE? WHAT IS THE BASIS OF THE SELECTION OF WHAT I PERCEIVE? In Kundalini Yoga, the emphasis is placed on discovering the reason in the mind for why I tend to perceive certain things and not others, rather than on trying to come to a common agreement with every one else as to what is there. It becomes apparent that the only truth we can ever really know is internal, arising out of our investigation of why we perceive in the way we do, and how our mind interprets.

The yogi differs from the conventional scientist in this respect. Whereas the scientist is interested in external agreement of data among several observers, the Yogi is interested in the internal meaning of the perceptual event in order to understand how the mind works and thereby to learn to control or direct it.

As we have said, ordinary perception is colored by individual differences, and this could be compared to our senses operating as dirty windows and half closed doors. To clean the windows and open the doors, we must clear away those factors responsible for these individual differences until finally we reach the state of comparatively uncolored perception, or what is often called paranormal phenomena.

HOW IS UNCOLORED PERCEPTION ACHIEVED? Let us consider the dynamics of perception. The senses bring in the information; the mind interprets this information. When we speak

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of the dirty windows of perception what we are really referring to is the distorted interpretations of our perceptions by the mind. So very quickly in our investigation of perception we are led to the question of how the mind interacts with the senses.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHAKRAS OF THE KUNDALINI SYSTEM. The interaction of mind and sense is an integral part of the Kundalini system. The dimensions of all human experience are represented by 7 chakras. Each chakra is symbolic for a level of awareness or perception which operates within us, each of the first being connected with one of the 5 major senses.

CHAKRA	SENSE	ASPECT OF MIND AFFECTING THE INTERPRETATION OF SENSORY INFORMATION
First	smell	survival, memory, mechanical, instinctual, drives, appetites, birth and death, choice, discrimination
Second	taste	imagination, likes and dislikes, desires, self-image
Third	sight	emotions, concepts, beliefs
Fourth	touch	feelings, humility, gratitude, sensitivity
Fifth	hearing	self-will, pride, surrender, responsibility

Mind, as the interpreter of all sense perceptions, is considered the 6th sense in Eastern thought. In the Sixth Chakra the objective and subjective parts of mind are brought together, giving unity to all pairs of opposites within, thereby also expanding and unifying perception. The Seventh Chakra is symbolic for the final exit from illusion, emergence of the enlightened being.

HOW ARE THE SYMBOLS OF THE CHAKRAS USED? Through Kundalini Yoga, using the symbols of the chakras, one can discover how the above aspects of mind influence what one selects to perceive and how that particular perception is interpreted. In this way we deal systematically with the problems, common to all human beings, that cloud perception and prevent clarity.

In each chakra the god symbolizes the potential or power available to the human being and the goddess symbolizes the manifestation of that power at each level. The objects held by the gods and goddesses symbolically point to the method of directing the particular aspect of mind operating in that chakra and thereby overcoming the challenges of that level in a very precise and logical way. Each follows the other in the proper sequence for human development.

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To give an example of this, the god in the First Chakra, representing energy unmanifest, is called the Child Brahma. One of the tools Child Brahma holds is the staff, symbolic of the need to maintain a tight spine, to be upright and straightforward. This is important on the mental level, as well as on the physical level, so that Kundalini Energy which is stored at its base can travel unimpeded through all the levels of consciousness located along the spine. Child Brahma, in this way indicates that we have the potential to be straightforward in all aspects of life, if we make the effort. He also holds a kamadalu, or container for water, as reminder that, within us, there exists a source of water that can quench the thirst for fulfillment and happiness in life.

A most important tool that Child Brahma holds is the mala of 108 beads to still the mind by repetition of the Name of the Divine. The use of such a Mantra, which is considered the highest form of speech, is most helpful in gaining control over the constant, generally negative thought that fills the mind. These negative thoughts color our perception and direct our energy into destructive ways of being.

The Child Brahma also makes a gesture to assure us that when we have sincerity, right intent, and humility all fear will be dispelled. These are qualities that allow us to have the courage to acknowledge and face any negative personality aspect, a necessary step before we are able to deal with them.

The goddess in the First Chakra is called the Dakini and the objects she holds are a spear, a staff with a skull on top, and sword and a drinking cup. Although these objects may appear strange to a Westerner, it makes only a little thought to understand their meaning on a personal level. The spear needs a target as well as practice in use. We must know what we are aiming for, as well as which characteristics we must aim at so our progress will not be impeded.

The empty skull on top of the staff tells us that we need to free our mind from the preconceived ideas that block new perceptions. When the mind is filled, nothing new can come it. New growth comes only from the destruction of the old. From the start we are told that we must look at the concepts and ideas we have held as our own, to find out if they are merely the result of conditioning and programming, having never been clearly thought.

Throughout the Kundalini system the sword is symbolic of discrimination. It appears in the First Chakra in the hands of the Dakini to tell us that discrimination, applied right at the beginning of our path, will cut down on mistakes and make our progress smoother.

The cup that she holds can receive the water of Divine Wisdom that is already within. If we take time to be quiet, "time to be holy", that wisdom will be available and will

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manifest in our lives. In each chakra the objects held by the god and goddess tell us exactly what we need to do. If we follow these symbolic instructions diligently and consistently, progress will be continuous and perception will increase or expand in a smooth and natural way.

EXPANDED PERCEPTION IN KUNDALINI YOGA. The chakra system is a guide for increasing self-awareness and expanding perception. Through it one can document one's progress. It allows one to lay a solid foundation, build character, and assures a safe and gradual evolution of consciousness. It is an abstract language that demands thought and reflection on one's own life. Throughout we are dealing with the mind, "using the mind to go beyond the mind," to expand the awareness within each level of consciousness.

Perception, ordinary or expanded, operates through each sense. The promise of this method is that if we learn to master the factors which color perception in the first three chakras, the working levels of everyday life, then another level is accessible to us. The Fourth chakra, the heart lotus, is the crossroads where a different stage of expanded perception and refinement can be entered. When the self-centered preoccupations of the first three chakras have been dealt with, to some degree at least, attention and energy can then be directed toward an expanded view of ourselves and our world.

WHAT IS MEANT BY EXPANDED PERCEPTION? In order to understand the nature of expanded perception, it would be helpful to find examples of those who are generally considered to have achieved some kind of extraordinary potential--the geniuses of our society. We might consider whether a large part of genius is perception and how an "ordinary" person could contact that level,

For example, what is the level of perception of a genius like Bach? From a yogic point of view, whatever manifests or comes into existence arises from ideas, thoughts, perceptions. Creativity comes from the ability to refine and expand perception. Perhaps genius as we know it is perception expanded in a certain realm, through a specific sense. Could it be possible that the genius of Bach came about through a refinement of the sense of hearing, through ethereal perception? What if Einstein received his theories rather than creating them, because of his ability to refine his perceptions?

In the Fifth Chakra the focus is on the sense of hearing. Learning how to really listen means subduing the self-will and ego, and allowing perceptions from higher realms to enter the mind. When we achieve that, all the work that has previously been done is available to us. If it were possible to achieve all-round expansion of perception of the sense what kind of genius would be the result? Could it be that one would become truly human--ready to take the next step in evolution? This method shows realms which, if manifested, would lead us to conclude that the individual who had

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achieved such a state was extraordinary, or a genius. In the spiritual field such a person is called "a saint."

The purpose of this work is to bring the senses into balance, to develop all areas of the human being in a safe, gradual way. No frightening "symptoms" need be encountered through this natural path of evolution, because the on-going process is a preparation for the body and the mind. It is in cooperating with our own evolution that it is speeded up. The result is, indeed, extraordinary, but without drama or sensationalism. If a person has been rocketed into another realm by sudden experiences of Kundalini, the work of laying the foundation and building character must nevertheless still be done to ensure proper and constructive use of this neutral energy.

WHAT ARE THE PARANORMAL OR EXTRAORDINARY POWERS THAT ARE PROMISED THROUGH THE KUNDALINI SYSTEM? Traditionally powers are promised to the individual who masters the challenges within each chakra. These powers illustrate what is meant by expanded perception through each sense if the personal work is done. It is not difficult for anyone who is doing this work to see that, as they become more and more free from obstruction, they really do "see" more, understand more, gain a wider perspective, love more spontaneously and less compulsively in accord with their own inner truth.

The more the mind is purified and selfishness overcome, the more balanced and cleansed the senses will become; and the powers inherent in each will come by themselves, without danger to the individual. These powers are expressed in symbolic terms, in accordance with the symbolic nature of the whole system.

For example, in the First Chakra (the Muladhara) the powers that are promised are Eternal Knowledge and freedom from all sin. In the light of our discussion, it can be seen that recognized mistakes and learning from them, developing intuition through reflection and practices aimed at stilling the mind, developing awareness and discrimination, as well as directing our attention to a chosen goal, can all help us to become free from "sin" (the intentional repetition of known mistakes) and to tune into the universal knowledge that comes from the Divine Source. At this level of development the understanding is only of the underlying principles and does not yet have personal application.

It is important to remember that Kundalini energy that is stored in the First Chakra is a neutral force within each human being. It is we who give it color and direction, but it is also we who can direct it to attain a high state of consciousness. Every human being has a possibility of expanding perception and reaching a potential that may, at the outset, appear impossible.

The powers that are promised in the second Chakra (the Svadhisthana) are the ability of well-reasoned discourse, prose or verse, and freedom from enemies. The imagination

is a power that can be used either for our elevation and creativity or for our destruction. The Power is neutral and it is the responsibility of all individuals to learn how to direct the imagination for their own benefit. It can be the basis for inspiration or for fear. The enemies from which we become free are those within our selves, based on ignorance and selfishness, which limit and imprison us. As we become aware of the power and prevalence of negative images, we can use the tools available to change them. These images in the mind create the world in which we live, narrowing perception and limiting vision.

The powers promised in the Third Chakra (the Manipura) are the power to create and destroy worlds and the Wealth of Knowledge. It is not difficult to understand that we also create the worlds around ourselves by the words we use and the way we use them. We can live in harmony, without selfishness in all its forms, or we can use words in a battle for dominance and power. To attain control over ourselves is the greatest power, requiring practice and awareness, and this inner harmony creates harmony in the world around us. It is the practice of awareness that creates a great personal Wealth of Knowledge in contrast to the Eternal Knowledge (of universal principles) to which we gain access in the First Chakra.

The Fourth Chakra (the Anahata) promises several powers: the ability to hear the Cosmic AUM, the ability to protect and destroy the three worlds, the ability to enter another's body and the ability to render one's self invisible. The hearing of the Cosmic AUM can take place only when the mind has been controlled and stilled, and one has learned how to truly listen. Generally the mind is filled with wants and desires, criticism and judgments. The increased understanding and discrimination that has been gained by learning from past mistakes will ensure making fewer mistakes in the present. With sincerity and devotion, humility and honesty, the Yoga student is now able to protect what has been gained, destroy any negative aspects from the past and use what has been learned in the future. These are the three worlds referred to by the promise.

Decrease in the power of self-will and the removal of self-protective screens, means that one can now give concentrated attention to others and thus understand them. This is called "entering another's body." The invisibility that is promised comes from no longer needing to be noticed or heard and therefore not drawing the attention of others to one's self.

The powers of the Fifth Chakra (the Visuddha) are many: to become free of worldly desires, to attain Complete Knowledge, to have knowledge of the past, present, and future, and the destruction of dangers. Our worldly desires have been useful; they have created ambition; skills, efficiency, and strengths; but they are no longer necessary. The energy that was locked up in these pursuits can now raise the student of Yoga to a higher plane, with will being surrendered

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to the Higher Self rather than to the ego-mind. This is the Gateway to Liberation.

The Complete Knowledge that is promised means that perception has increased so that all that has been gained in previous work now comes together in personal meaning and application. One can now see the three worlds of past, present, and future with greater clarity, to understand what must still be done and where expansion is desirable. The power of destruction of danger comes about by thinking through, taking great care in all actions and reactions, and by increasing awareness and discrimination.

In the Sixth Chakra (the Ajna) one understands that one has created one's life, and that all the pains and problems have been necessary for the process of learning. The promise of being the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the three worlds is understood: that which has been gained needs to be preserved and that which is no longer necessary must be destroyed. Excellent unknown powers are acquired (beyond the knowing of the mind), and the pure intellect that is promised means that intellect is now free from selfish desires.

CONCLUSION. Yoga is a practical science which enables us to take charge of our lives and responsibly direct our daily activities. Its goal is to realize our full potential, and expand our consciousness. Yoga ultimately teaches a person how to gain freedom from the habitual constraints of the mind's narrow interpretations of life and to enhance the quality of life. In this context expanded perception becomes a much needed tool to make proper choices in daily life. In the study of Kundalini as developed by Swami Radha, perceptions which have been termed "paranormal" have their place but they are not seen as an end in themselves. When they are viewed as part of the overall process of self-development and Self realization they are neither overvalued nor undervalued.

As perception expands, paranormal or extra-sensory perceptions may occur. They can be seen as an indication that the individual is moving steadily toward the goal, but they also arise from an extraordinary development of a particular sense. From a yogic perspective, paranormal phenomena are not necessarily indicative of spiritual advancement.

To conclude, continuous clarification and awareness of the contents of the mind enable one to understand the influence of perception on the events of one's life. From this emerges a knowledge of those factors which inhibit or limit perception, allowing us to awaken from the "sleepwalker" state of mechanical being. As perception expands we realize more of our potential and make our way toward great freedom. The greatest power that can be achieved is control of the mind.

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*Authors' note: This paper is based largely on Kundalini: Yoga for the West by Swami Sivananda Radha and therefore may not be transmitted or copied in any way without the written permission of Timeless Books, Box 160, Porthill, ID 83853. Swami Radha wrote this book at the urging of her students, many years after she received the Teachings in India from her Guru, Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh, and her Tibetan Guru. The book is the result of her own dedicated personal work with the system over a period of 25 years, supported by research from a wide variety of traditional texts and other books. Both Swami Padmananda and Linda Anne Seville are direct disciples of Swami Sivananda Radha.

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KUNDALINI, LOVE, AND THE FUTURE OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

Mary Carman Rose

The author explores the hypothesis that the bringing the I-Thou attitude to one's study of kundalini and of the paranormal may have beneficial effects within these investigations; and she draws attention to the need to introduce non-Hindu experiences, concepts, and views of reality in a non-reductive way into these studies.

In this paper I am concerned with questions pertaining to the development of the investigation of the paranormal, with special reference to questions about the investigation of kundalini. My reflections have been shaped by two presuppositions: (1) No method of investigation has, as such, been discovered or worked out initially in all its completeness, but rather each method has been gradually developed by investigators in response to the investigative requirements of their particular areas of inquiry and (2) a mode of investigation chosen or created at the outset of inquiry into any one area requires continuous assessment for its adequacy in that area and may be found to require modification, supplementation or even supplantation as the inquiry proceeds.

FEATURES OF KUNDALINI GERMANE TO THIS ESSAY. The powers and correlative roles claimed for kundalini are prodigious¹; but a selection among these many roles will serve in this context as basis for my reflection on the challenges we face in working out adequate modes of study of kundalini. Further, the discernment of fruitful modes of inquiry into kundalini is no small challenge. For, on the one hand, this study must incorporate pre-scientific and extra-scientific conclusions of classical Hindu thought which has a special role in investigation of kundalini since it is primarily from Hinduism that we are learning about kundalini today. But, on the other hand, to the extent that it is possible, this study must also include insights which might pertain to kundalini and which are provided by non-Hindu Eastern sources and philosophical/religious Western sources. What, for example, of the Chinese Chi and the Japanese ki; the Shinto makoto and kororo; the Greek eros; the Hebrew Shekinah, tzaddig and Merkabah mysticism; and the Christian agape and Holy Spirit? Also, it is essential that we be willing to include all evidence and insights coming from contemporary Western science and also those coming from accounts of personal experiences which may have involved kundalini.

I will here draw attention to six features attributed to kundalini, each of which is drawn from papers read at the 1988 ARPR conference: (1) Within human nature kundalini is an instrument of evolution;² (2) Kundalini has a role in the types of creativity which are all-important in at least some truth seeking;³ (3) Very likely kundalini cooperates with eros which finds some of its fulfillment in truth-seeking

activity but also in the individual's contemplation of the truth he has achieved and in his use of truth;⁴ (4) Kundalini is personalistic in its effects within the individual's nature and life;⁵ (5) The development of kundalini may be correlated with improvement of physical health;⁶ (6) Kundalini is of great importance in spiritual development and maturation.⁷ The fact that there is apparent disagreement among the authors of these essays speaks to the richness of the subject and draws our attention to the need for studying kundalini from many perspectives. The wealth of material drawn from personal stories provided in these Proceedings also illumines the need for decisive identification of kundalini and also of the occasions in which it is not present.

Further, a propos not only of the legitimacy but, in fact, of the need for introducing personal stories into the study of kundalini as sources of evidence concerning the latter, my reflection for this paper is in part based on my own experiences in intellectual and spiritual development which, thanks to our present emphasis as academic community on the study of kundalini, I believe I have come to understand a little more fully than I have before, while that increased understanding has raised new questions for me to which I have not yet worked out answers.

These personal experiences which I have in mind center on the following. Early in adolescence, (all unexpectedly and with nothing apparent in my background to account even a little for these exciting new interests), I developed an all absorbing passion for truth seeking in the precise mathematical sciences, i.e., physics and astronomy. This passion was initially, and remained for some years, a profound love of what I believed to be objective truth concerning the cosmos and also a major locus of beauty. I did not find out until years later that Plato had memorialized a conversation between Socrates and Diotima which recalled us all to see truth-seeking as the making a contribution to the "science of beauty everywhere."⁸ My deep-seated interest in truth seeking later developed into a commitment to cautious, responsible creativity within the most basic philosophical issues--viz., metaphysics, axiology, and epistemology. But (in my case), ineluctably as I now see it, this process of intellectual and spiritual development eventually found its fulfillment in a Christian understanding of wondrous Greek insights brought to their Christian goal by Augustine: "These lovely things would be nothing if they were not from God."⁹

KUNDALINI AND VALUE. An additional presupposition in this essay is that love, integrity, good will, courage, and honest, clear thinking to the extent permitted by one's capacities, education, and opportunities for reflection are beneficial to the human spirit, while their opposites are not beneficial. I use the good here to name those ideals which, as I see it, all the great world religions, and each according to its own lights and to its degree of insight into these ideals, offer as nourishing the spirit of the

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individual who, loving them, attempts to appropriate them in his life. I use disvalue for all that which, when it shapes an individual's valuational nature, is inimical to the true well-being of his spirit and mind and, of course his effects on others. At the heart of what I am calling disvalue, then, there is self-seeking--the pursuit of one's own pleasure or power over others.

Although I believe there is ample justification for the view I have expressed in the foregoing--viz., that the great world religions are not totally diverse in their axiological commitment--yet we must take pains to avoid the oversimplification of the issues I have raised in the last paragraph. Several historically significant disagreements concerning the good and disvalue are relevant here.

Thus, some have preferred the view that one or more forms of what I have called disvalue are either man's true good or the only values of which man is capable. There is Hobbes' view that all men are inherently and permanently self-seeking. There are also several forms of psychological and ethical hedonism. Opposed to these are the views that our true and, to some extent at least, attainable good lies in the ideals I have called attention to--e.g., in some form and degree of sincere concern for others. But concerning benevolence as value there are diverse views. Thus, there is Stoic apathy in which one works for the well being of others, believing that no aspect of reality cherishes the individual per se and hence that the wise man cultivates an apathy toward his personal goals and the nature of his own life. Opposed to this Stoic interpretation of concern for others, there is the Christian belief that God cherishes the individual forever and that the person who is faithful to the good as he sees it does not lack his reward. There is the view found in Taoism and some Buddhism that both value and disvalue cancel out ultimately, which is different from the view of the three Western monotheisms that the individual's choosing or failing to choose the good and, as far as he can, fighting for it in this life is of great significance for his eternal destiny. Then there is the gnostic view that "the disobedience to God's laws is really virtue" which is totally different from the Christian view that it is only through obedience to laws and spiritual principles which man did not make that the individual finds spiritual fulfillment and his true peace: "...whoever does not enter the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."¹⁰

KUNDALINI AS AXIOLOGICALLY NEUTRAL. Many aspects of nature are apparently axiologically neutral--i.e., they may be used by humans for self-aggrandizement or destructive purposes or they may be used for well-intentioned, benevolent purposes. Thus, nuclear energy may be used for destruction or for helpful and peaceful ends. A dog well-treated can be a companion and reliable guardian; but exploited, he can become unpredictably vicious. Again, the Greek concept of eros is useful here for our understanding of the individual's valuational nature. From one perspective it is a truism to say that eros pertains to what the indivi-

dual loves because it is what his spirit longs for as fulfilling his deepest needs. It is not a truism, however, to point out the investigative significance of whether eros in the individual longs primarily for his own dominance and self-aggrandizement or for the finding his well being in a life of service in which he endeavors to foster the well-being of others.

We need not here enter into the troubled issue as to whether kundalini is axiologically neutral in respect to its roles in the spirit, mind, character structure, and commitment of the person in whom it arises. Among those who are well informed about kundalini there seems to be no agreement on this point.¹¹ In any event, however, how kundalini is studied will depend on the state of eros in the investigator. Hence, I will presuppose here that most normal adult humans have a choice as to what they will make of their investigative gifts, education and opportunities and that if they choose to act in terms of the good, they will again and again have the opportunity of remaining faithful to that choice or of failing to sustain it. And I will argue that the investigator's choice and his faithfulness to it may be of crucial importance in the carrying out of effective and salutary study of kundalini.

THE I-THOU RELATION AND THE STUDY OF KUNDALINI. Since Martin Buber introduced the concepts of the I-Thou and the I-It relations in mid-twentieth century, they have become commonplaces of philosophical and theological literature.¹² Nonetheless, their investigative significance has not yet been adequately developed. When we make of our object of inquiry an "It," our inquiry is not based in our respect for that object. We are willing to use it for our own ends; and, if we are interested in its inherent nature, it is because we believe that this stance will maximize our advantage over it. When, however, we enter into the I-Thou relation to our objects of inquiry, we are motivated fundamentally by a sustained respect for them which gives rise to the desire to come to know their real nature in so far as this is possible and subsequently to relate ourselves to them according to our knowledge of their nature. And there are two further steps we can take in the cultivation of the I-Thou relation: first, we may be willing to foster the well-being of our objects of inquiry; and second, we may also be willing to make some personal sacrifices for the sake of the well-being of what we are prepared to investigate.

What are the roles of the I-Thou relation in the study of kundalini? The spiritual tradition that has given us our initial knowledge of kundalini has claimed for kundalini centrally important roles in man, his relation to reality, and in the evolving of human nature. It also claims that kundalini can lead us into an adequate understanding of ourselves and our intellectual/spiritual development. I suggest that it follows that we will do well to try to know kundalini as it is in itself. This last follows from the possibility that some leadership in human development comes

from kundalini and that hence, ideally we do not impose our will on kundalini. Moreover, this view seems to be implicit in claims of teleological and personalistic elements in kundalinic activity--e.g., the claims that the activities of kundalini seem capable of both wisdom and prescience in the ways they meet the spiritual and intellectual needs of the individual. In last year's conference papers this topic was not developed, but there was no suggestion that we are free to impose our wills and preferences on our study of kundalini; and this gives at least implicit agreement to the view that in our investigation of kundalini we will aim to learn about kundalini as it is--i.e., as it is "in itself."

OBJECTIVITY IN SCIENTIFIC OR OTHER TYPES OF INQUIRY. This last leads us to consideration of the possible roles of objectivity as sine qua non in scientific inquiry. I suggest that the concept of objectivity in inquiry is often used very loosely and that the usual meanings it is given are inadequate to illumine its genuine roles in inquiry. For example, a popular opinion seems to be that objectivity entails absence of love of the objects or area we are investigating and no personal preference in respect to the outcome of our inquiry. If, however, our interest in objectivity springs from a desire to come to know the real nature of the objects of inquiry, then I suggest that from our work with both animals and humans we learn that indifference to them is far less advantageous in our desire to learn about our objects of inquiry than is our fostering concern with and perhaps love of them.

Both eros (i.e., our love for that which we need because it is essential to our spiritual well-being) and agape (i.e., our love by virtue of which we are willing to give of our selves and to serve) are aids in achieving this understanding, because both loves need to know the loved object as it is. And I will add here the speculative hypothesis that the cultivating and sustaining of both types of love make for a conformity between our mind and our object of inquiry. Again, if we wish to assess the hypothesis that there is a relation between kundalini and the divine (as some speakers suggested at the 1988 conference), commitment to honest observation brings the intention to avoid bias in inquiry. Personal preference for one interpretation of a phenomenon over others may be, but is not necessarily, accompanied by bias in inquiry. Rather, when bias is present, it is part of human spiritual and intellectual pathology or immaturity. The clear thinking, intellectually honest person does not falsify his inquiry to give advantage to his preference. On the other hand, his work is not somehow vitiated because he has a personal preference for a particular interpretation of kundalini.

Thus, I suggest that the study of kundalini requires the kind of objectivity that derives from the sustaining an unqualified I-Thou relation to our area of inquiry. And if this suggestion has merit, then very likely we will find that as our inquiry into the nature and roles of kundalini proceeds, our insight into the roles of the I-Thou relation

in that inquiry will develop also. And we will not know in advance to what new epistemological concepts and insights this attention to investigative attitudes will bring us. Certainly, in respect to the epistemology of our investigation, we will do well to firm up at present only the steps immediately before us, leaving open the nature of possible future epistemological developments. Bearing in mind some suggestions made at the 1988 ARPR conference, I will draw attention to three presently discernible implications of the I-Thou relation and its objectivity in the study of kundalini.

(1) In the very useful philosophical and religious inquiry of both East and West which preceded the development of modern Western science, it was taken for granted that the investigator's spirit and attitudes as well as his intellect have roles in his work, and also that for maximal effectiveness of his efforts he would need the appropriate spiritual development and attitudes which, as I have suggested above, are those sanctioned by the axiological orientation of reality as discerned and interpreted in the intellectual/spiritual milieu of the thinker. For example, there is the Indian "Knowledge of music without devotion to God, O Mind, can it be the right path?"¹³ and the ideal development of both mind and spirit in the person whose vocation is to seek truth is a chief theme in the Platonic Dialogues.¹⁴ Thus, I have not created an investigative novelty here. Rather, I have re-introduced the conception of the epistemological roles of spirituality and attitude into all our reflection and investigation, insight which has been eroded in modern times. And, specifically, I have adapted that conception to the study of kundalini.

(2) In the study of kundalini, among the requisite attitudes will be willingness to serve the study of kundalini at some cost to one's self. That such a demand is likely to be made on those who are engaged in the study of kundalini is apparent. There is, for example, the predominately Indian source of present-day Western knowledge of kundalini. The study of kundalini, however, will require a profound willingness (eagerness, rather) to remain open to all reported experiences, insights, concepts, and suggestions pertaining to kundalini whatever their source. This will take no little self-sacrifice on the part of the person who wishes to study kundalini but who is already persuaded of the adequacy and completeness of any one of the major Indian Hindu or Buddhist accounts of kundalini.

3. The willingness for self-giving service entails emphasis on integrity in inquiry, and at the very least this means the achievement of no little self-knowledge on the part of the investigator. Whether the cause be ignorance, the will to dominance, self-seeking, the desire to be right, or the intention to support the teachings of a favorite spiritual leader, the rejection of data and views possibly relevant to kundalini and the refusal to be open to claims that the activity and significance of kundalini may vary

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from one spiritual path to another may be disadvantageous to kundalini research.

THE FUTURE OF PSYCHIC RESEARCH. In calling attention to the possibility that the I-Thou relation has an essential role in the study of kundalini we have moved beyond all our currently widely accepted modes of inquiry; but, as I have suggested, we have reintroduced, and begun a new development of, some earlier convictions, or better perhaps, previously achieved wisdom, concerning human investigative powers. This step opens to us new vistas of epistemological inquiry. I will here develop only a few aspects of the possible import of these vistas for psychic research.

The 20th century discovery that our inquiry into nuclear physics has an effect on our study of matter is sometimes uncritically extended into all areas of inquiry from physics to psychic research. Almost always, however, this extension has sometimes been carried out uncritically, and we have been talking too glibly of the "end of observer science." And because of current interest in this subject it makes a convenient introduction to the last phase of this paper. I suggest that the effects of our concerns on the entire gamut of the realities we encounter and also on ourselves and our experiences have many facets involving perhaps all phases of experience; all encounters with reality; and all levels of reality. It is not the same thing in the case of nuclear physics, encounters with other humans or animals, reflection on the cosmos, possible angelic realms, or the divine. In large part, the significance of this last is that the human involvement with reality has different meanings and import for each type of concern and level of reality. The important point here is that the fact that we cannot observe the velocity of some fundamental particles of matter without influencing their position does not mean that we cannot be observers of, for example, the pain or joy of a sentient creature without changing that experience.

The concept of wonder will aid us in the development of these issues in respect to psychic research. The import of wonder within inquiry has often been noted. Plato and Aristotle provided generalizations concerning these roles of wonder, declaring that all inquiry begins in wonder. And Bonaventura declared that we cannot investigate without wonder or without love.¹⁵

Further, a propos of my own experience of intellectual and spiritual development I have had first hand experience with the importance of this wonder which derived from the heart of my own intellectual and spiritual awakening and the value of which for me has remained undistorted and undiminished over many decades. My initial wonder before the complexities of nature as revealed in the genuinely precise sciences of physics and astronomy, has, however, been newly illumined by, and has found completion in, a greater wonder: the wonder that suffuses my love for the divine source of the order and beauty to which my wonder and impulse to inquire was initially limited. I have been enabled to have

faith that it is the one God who is the fullness of the reason why wonder is properly pervasive in our spirituality. Not only my intellect, my conscience, my self-knowledge, but also my capacity for wonder grew as they were disciplined while I was arriving at my own spiritual home.

In my reflections here, my knowledge of psychic experience has also been a help. It is a truism that in our concerns we are not limited to sensory objects alone. For example, we can work with ideal abstractions too, as in pure mathematics. (To be sure, there are many explanations as to how our conceptions of abstractions derive from sensory experiences.) But important here is the possibility that the soul may be free to travel to areas of reality where the physical senses cannot function and to hear and to see apart from the body. And personally I am convinced there is ample evidence that the soul can possess foreknowledge of important events, and can also have the grace-filled experience of understanding, at last, the nature and the value of events long past. There is a possibility that Socrates' question, "What am I?", may legitimately be answered the way Socrates' was willing to answer it: with the view that although in this life we are necessarily embodied, we are essentially spiritual beings. Also, there is the capacity for wonder along with the capacity to appreciate and to love many aspects of creation apart from reference to one's self; and the longing to make progress in achievement of the ideal of self-giving in service to truth and its beauty, to man but also to other sentient creatures, and, from my perspective, to the divine, which I have learned to interpret along personalistic lines.

We may now consider the foregoing in respect to human creativity in investigation of reality, and in particular the investigation of the paranormal. Creativity, of course, has a variety of meanings, and there are at least three meanings of creativity with which I am not concerned here. First, there is the myth-making creativity, which, although as creativity it is generally based on some experience of reality and although this creativity may become eloquent as well as spiritually and intellectually powerful in the minds of others, nonetheless it is not creativity in the sense of the literal discernment of objective truth with which I am concerned here. Then there is that type of artistic creativity which is not intended to be the expression-in-beauty of some objective truths, a prime example of such expression-in-beauty being the Hebrew Psalms as these are generally interpreted by both Jews and Christians. And I note very briefly here the intended inquiry into reality which is, in fact, the product of projection and idiosyncratic thinking perhaps born of wishful thinking, personal needs, or self-aggrandizement. Rather, I am interested here in the creativity which is the wish, the intent, and the openness to whatever experience life provides, for the sake of coming to know objective realities as they are and to articulate these findings clearly and unequivocally for those prepared intellectually and spiritually to understand them.

Finally, this creativity and its investigative openness ideally are accompanied by or grow into good will, eagerness for and love of the truth, and a willingness to try to live the truth, all of which comprise the *sine qua non* for achieving commitment to a genuinely significant spiritual path. I will articulate my idea this way: the essential investigative creativity ideally is accompanied by faith, hope, and charity. I have expressed these three spiritual characteristics in the familiar language of the New Testament. But I suggest that each great spiritual path of East or West provides its own positive analogue to these. Leaving aside the roles of faith and hope in study of the paranormal in relation to religion, I will concentrate briefly on charity.

Charity here is fundamentally agape; but necessarily it is also eros, which may for all humans in this life may said to be correlative to agape. This is true because no one of us in this life possesses agape in its perfection nor with the assurance that we will never lose the capacity for agape which we have achieved. Thus, within agape, eros is present as a longing to maintain the capacity for agape and to increase that capacity we already possess. In respect to psychic research both eros and agape are relevant because the person whose psychic experiences have helped lead him into commitment to the good, will welcome into his personal life, his community, and into our global predicament these psychic sources of insight which again and again have proved wiser than those to whom the psychic experiences have come. Further, both agape and eros are relevant in this context because we properly will love the multifaceted psychic experiences that have helped shape most of the great visions and means of spiritual and intellectual fulfillment and also because we love and hope to continue these psychic experiences that guide and assure us in our individual lives.

I have suggested above, that in the study of kundalini and in all facets of psychic research we will need in the future to admit personal stories of experiences with psychism and with an unqualified desire to know as far as we can their subjective content as well as their importance and effects within the individual's life, particularly in his spirituality and intellectuality. And we need to accept the distinctive evidence provided by each of the great world religions. In this project a desideratum for all, but *sine qua non* for some, is the sincere sustained desire for rapprochement with the axiological orientation of reality. Not intellectual training alone but spiritual development also is prerequisite for inquiry in psychic research.

Finally, some additional comments a propos of my personal spiritual and intellectual development. Some of the often recorded features of kundalinic arousal I also found in my experience. Certainly my experiences aroused in me an intense interest in creativity in truth seeking, an interest which eventually found its goal in truth-seeking in philosophy, in the inter-relations between philosophy and the theology of theism, and in the manifold relations between

philosophy, theology, and all spiritual paths to which humans have been committed.

Love, both the longing and incompleteness of eros in truth-seeking and the zeal fired by the fulfillment of agape were, and continue to be, involved in my spirit. This process obviously had a teleology: after many years it clearly became my own spiritual and intellectual ("wholistic" would be a good word to use here) home-coming. One thing that I have learned, once and for all, I believe, is that there are virtually as many wholistic home-comings as there are individuals who do not harden their hearts against the call to come to their home. Certainly we do not all hear the same kind of call nor are our spiritual homes the same. This is not to say, however, that I do not find and very much appreciate the finding those whose spiritual home closely resembles my own. I have found my own home (and very much to my surprise) in orthodox Christianity, and I mention this last fact here only because of its possible significance for the study of kundalini and for psychic research. If my personal-story-to-date did indeed involve kundalini as well as the psychic or paranormal (which it certainly has involved) then perhaps this story provides some evidence that the fact of the existence of diverse spiritual paths leading to fulfillment is of central importance for the investigation of the paranormal, and specifically for kundalini.

¹See, for example, the many claims made about the importance of kundalini in the human organism and spirit, and hence in human affairs, in the highly diverse papers included in the Proceedings of the 1988 Annual Conference of The Academy of Religion and Psychical Research. -

²Gene Kieffer, Proceedings of the 1988 Annual Conference of ARPR, pp. 1-18.

³Ibid., Davis, pp. 32-34; Gilbert, pp. 102-110; Pond, pp. 58-72.

⁴Ibid., Haske, pp. 19-31; Rose, pp. 111-119.

⁵Ibid., Greenwell, pp. 35-48.

⁶Ibid., Rodio, pp. 85-101.

⁷Ibid., Bradford, 49-57; White, 73-84; Mantica, pp. 120-127; Olayata, pp. 128-134.

⁸Plato, "Symposium."

⁹St. Augustine, The Confessions. Trans. by Frank Sheed. New York, NY:Sheed and Ward, 1942

¹⁰Luke 18:17 (RSV)

¹¹So far as the essays in the ARPR Proceedings for 1988 are concerned, there is no agreement among the authors in respect to the valuational

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nature of kundalini or the importance of the question I have raised here about the orientation of the activity of kundalini.

¹²Martin Buber, I and Thou. trans. by R.G. Smith. New York, NY, 1958.

¹³The Great Asian Religions, compiled by Wing-Tsit Chan, Isma'il Ragi Al Faruqi, et al. New York, NY: Macmillan, 1969. p. 84.

¹⁴This is, I suggest, one of the fundamental beliefs in which Plato's "Republic" is based.

¹⁵Bonaventura, The Mind's Road to God. Trans. by George Boas. New York, NY: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963. pp. 4-5.

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EVOLUTION AND KUNDALINI

Frank G. Pollard

Since research on Kundalini by biologists specializing in evolutionary theory seems the most viable scientific approach, the author examines Kundalini from the directed view of an evolutionary event. Seen as the response of the organism to stress, the kundalini experience is a common event in the history of evolution. Parallels are drawn to similar events in nature described by proponents of the "punctuated equilibrium" theory of evolution.

In looking at a paranormal or spiritual subject with wide ramifications it is wise to remember along with Ortega¹ that "all knowledge is knowledge from a definite point of view." In looking at kundalini we seem to be in not much better shape than the fabled blind man examining the elephant. As you may remember, each view produced a different opinion: "It's a snake;" "It's like a fan;" "It's like a post;" "It's like a wall;" and, finally, "It's like a rope." In our New Age I have visualized another blind man who decides to cogitate or meditate about it. Taking up the lotus position directly in front of the last man of the fable, he theorizes in the Light of Reason or calls on his spirit guides or relatives. In any case, after ten minutes he suddenly jumps up screaming, "It's like an outhouse on stilts" and runs off to cleanse himself in the sacred Ganges. His view is just as valid as any of the others. In Ortega's words, "Reality is possessed of an infinite number of perspectives, all equally veracious and authentic." The search for truth requires us to examine many views and formulate a synthesis that can be examined and tested further.

ALTERNATIVE VIEWS OF KUNDALINI. The Random House Dictionary² defined "kundalini" as a "spiritual power said to be located at the base of the spine and liberated through the chakras." This definition allows us many views and the integration of all such valid views into a holistic paradigm may be a goal of this conference. Of the "infinite perspectives" which may be worthy consideration three seem to stand out: (1) Kundalini as a spiritual power; (2) Kundalini as a biological syndrome; and (3) Kundalini as an evolutionary event".

In the first of these demands we explore, the literature goes back at least several hundred years. The confidence in the validity of our findings will be tempered by such insights as: "Three quarters of Buddhist books are useless," according to Rama Anagarika Govinda as quoted by Renee Weber³ in Dialogues with Sages and Scientists. Gopi Krishna did not believe in the physical existence of chakras.⁴ Dr. Frederick Spiegelberg as quoted in Krishna's book states: "The vocabulary of the Kundalini Yoga system refers neither to those facts which in the West are considered

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psychological nor to anything within the realm of the body as it is observed outside." Hard facts may be hard to come by from this perspective.

An on-going study of the biological (and psychological) syndrome could produce a wealth of data such as:

1. The neurological patterns exhibited by the kundalini experience both in the resting and altered states is indicated by CAT, EEG, PET, and NMRI techniques.
2. The physical manifestations of heat and cold through the body.
3. The physical connections between the brain and the base of the spine. They may be strictly electrical/nervous as suggested by the work of Dr. Robert Becker.⁵
4. Genetic changes, if any.

Such studies may have to wait a long time for appropriate funding. My personal dream is that in the near future we shall have a staff member of a teaching hospital acquiring a kundalini experience. The results will probably be reported in medical journals around the world. For this, too however, I think we must wait.

Krishnamurti might not approve of scientific approaches. Weber³ says that Krishnamurti was not interested in discussing science "because scientist is knowledge and is too far from reality to pierce its secrets." Physicist Max Delbruck takes a different view and states that "with science we can transcend our eyes and ears." By looking at kundalini as an evolutionary event (or perhaps even as a microevent) we hope to take a scientific view. We can confine ourselves to solid facts and some less than solid evidence which will later be confirmed or refuted. If these facts suggest certain patterns we can speculate. We can avoid the metaphorical and cryptic language. The difference between psychological fact for the experienter and the scientific fact for the observer should not be stumbling blocks. It should not be difficult to separate the facts, the appearance of patterns and our speculations. The trade-off is, of course, a very restricted one. Looking at the evolutionary aspects of kundalini may be as restricted a view as a blind man looking at the skin of an elephant. However, a blink scientist examining the skin of an elephant might deduce the present of a large, slow-moving, vegetarian animal with prodigious strength and eating habits and perhaps even large ears to stabilize its body temperature.

KUNDALINI AS AN EVOLUTIONARY EVENT. One connection between kundalini and evolution is stress. Stress is a prime-mover in evolution. A species is stressed by changes in the environment. If it is never stressed it remains a "living fossil" like the coelacanth. If it is stressed beyond the breaking point, it dies off. If it survives, it

acquires more negentropy and goes onward and upward as a more capable life-form. The greater the stresses the greater the risks and the rewards. When Darwin's finches overtook their food supply, those which survived evolved into different creatures with different beaks which could live on previously unsuitable food sources.

Gopi reported his stress as follows:

...the ferment caused in the body resembled in effect the last-minute frantic effort made for succor when life is in imminent danger and I, a dumb and helpless witness to the show, could not help but pass hours of agony.

Krishnamurti who was trained in India to be a Messiah and then was subjected to bigotry in England, may have understood his stress when at the age of 27 he was quoted as saying, "I have not been what is called happy for many years".⁷

At this conference last year Pauline Davis reported "a rapid rise in body temperature controlled by an outside force...and levitation". Susan C. Haske reported her several weeks of crisis, with waves of pressure, a different consciousness and visions, as part of the considerable stress she recognized. Bonnie Greenwell speaking of her own experiences and others whom she has interviewed reported "sudden apparent physical illnesses, pains and eating disorders" as well as "a tumultuous confrontation at physical, emotional, and spiritual levels". Paul Pond reported mental disturbances as one of the signposts of an awakened Kundalini.

Stress in the human body according to Dr. Gazzandga in Mind Matters:

...trigger(s) a complex response that involves more than 1400 physiochemical reactions in the brain and body, and all of these changes are orchestrated by two main systems managed by the brain: the autonomic nervous system and the neuroendocrine system of the body.⁸

The impact of stress in the evolutionary process may be understood in the behavior of the slime mold. The slime mold is a colony of one-celled, primitive micro-organisms which live in decaying vegetation on the forest floor. It absorbs food through the cell wall and propagates asexually by budding. Like every other species, it can suffer stress through a lack of food. If its food supply runs out, it dies. Right? Wrong. When its food supply becomes inadequate for the growing colony these tiny microorganisms with primitive capabilities clump together. Then they move as a single creepy-crawly entity which is recognized as a slug. It seems to be a member of the animal kingdom at a much later stage of evolution. Then it crawls to another part of the forest, stands on its tail, grows roots, and then a

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head. In the head it grows spores which when developed are blown out with an explosive force to other parts of the forest. There, each spore starts another colony which reverts to its previous life-style as a micro-organism. All of these changes were induced from the stress of food deprivation. We can only imagine the fits and starts, the failed attempts and the tress suffered by those microorganisms who tried and failed. Powerful stresses produce powerful evolutionary mechanisms.

CURRENT CONCEPTS IN EVOLUTION. We must keep in mind that stress-related evolution is a slow genetic process depending on information being passed on from parent to offspring. However, evolution may be an all-pervasive process. In the words of Ilya Prigogine, who was awarded a Nobel prize for finding evolution in non-organic systems, the universal condition may be better described as co-evolution:

...everything is developing simultaneously and affecting everything else--the whole is evolving--everything is a process.⁹

Another Nobel prize winning biologist Rupert Sheldrake claims:

...living organisms are affected by "morphic resonance" of similar organism and their own predecessors...living things have a morphogenetic field that they interact with...¹⁰

We must keep in mind that Sheldrake has reached such conclusions from years of work in scientific investigations. He is not talking of such New Age concepts as psyches, mind-at-large, auras, or the spirit of the planet. Or is he?

Shaman Rolling Thunder claims to recognize the "spirit of the planet" and "communicates" with both vegetation and other forms of life.¹¹ One of the most difficult and rewarding books I have read is a dialogue between Krishnamurti and physicist David Bohm of implicate order fame.¹² I would love to read a dialogue between Sheldrake and Rolling Thunder. More recently, John Cairns reports work which the American Institute for the Advancement of Science labels "A heresy in Evolutionary Biology".¹³ Cairns' work suggests that "bacteria can choose which mutations they should produce." In this regard Maxine Singer had found repeated pockets of fresh, unpatterned DNA in the human genome¹⁴ and the genetic potential of the mitochondria (energy process regulators) in the body has not been completely explained according to physician Lewis Thomas.¹⁵ Cairns cautions:

...that bacteria are quite different from higher organisms, however; a bacterium's genes are the very ones it passes on to its offspring, whereas multicellular organisms sequester their genetic legacy in distinct germ cells. Even if directed mutation is found to be widespread in higher

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organisms...however, one would expect evolution to favor the preservation of such a useful trick.

KUNDALINI IS A MEME. While the proliferation of the Kundalini experience through the genetic process does not seem probable in our near future, this probability may not be important. Cultural evolution is now the driving force in mankind. While cultural evolution has been noted by Dawkins¹⁶ in the animal kingdom, only in mankind has it been found to be a strong driving force and only in the last 400 years has it shown almost explosive power. With the invention of movable type, man's ability to communicate began a number of quantum jumps. The gene is a mechanism for passing knowledge on from parent to offspring. In mankind, knowledge does not have to be passed on genetically. While the offspring of sparrows or lower birds build their nests from genetic information, the offspring of a carpenter may be an architect or interior designer and do things quite differently. The replicating mechanism is called a "meme" rather than a gene.

Memes may be songs as Dawkins found in some saddleback birds in New Zealand. Memes are ideas, concepts, habits, ways of making pots or building arches. Genes and memes support each other in clusters. In Dawkins' words:

Mutually suitable teeth, claws, guts, and sense organs evolved in carnivore gene pools while a different stable set of characteristics evolved from herbivorous gene pools...We could regard an organized church with its architecture, rituals, laws, music, art, and written tradition as a co-adapted stable set of mutually assisting memes.

Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms and eggs so memes propagate by leaping from brain to brain. Memes replicate faster than genes. When we die there are two things we leave behind: genes and memes. Kundalini is a meme.

The nearest meme I have found to Kundalini is the near-death-experience (NDE). After reading Marilyn Ferguson's accounts of NDE's, I was struck by the science fiction concept of reaching Utopia via NDE's.¹⁷ The plot for the book would start with an American chemist and a Russian physicist socializing at an international conference and casually discussing NDE's. Later in both countries NDE's are found to be arising in localized areas at an amazing rate. In America they seem to center around New Age communities. In Russia they originate in mental hospitals and pockets of rebellion. When it is discovered that these NDE's have been safely induced and the enlightened personality change is beneficial, citizens begin to demand it. When it has progressed through the Politburo and the US centers of government, Utopia is reached. I passed on the idea to an author capable of writing the book. His reply was, "I've done something much like that but it is not quite finished. I've used Kundalini rather than the NDE." Both Kundalini and

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the NDE result in stress-induced enlightenment. We could consider Kundalini as a sub-set of the NDE.

THE FUTURE OF KUNDALINI. If we look at Kundalini as a meme which is passed on from brain to brain regardless of genetic flow, if any, we must recognize the mechanisms which determine the meme's rate of proliferation. The replicators of information such as genes and memes are dependent on the factors of longevity, fecundity, and copying-fidelity. An age old meme like Kundalini can survive better than last week's top rock tune. Fecundity of memes is a function of how many brains they will be passed on to via conversation, radio, TV and printed material. Unless they are faithfully copied from brain to brain, they may not survive as discrete entities.

The Kundalini meme is not a well-defined meme and may be sharpened or blurred if it is considered to be a sub-set of the NDE, a manifestation of mind-at-large or mental disease. Psychiatrists can be expected to generate their own definitions in accordance with their own value system. The mutual assistance of other memes from the paranormal meme-pool will affect the future of Kundalini.

The Kundalini meme is not widespread as of yet. There are entrenched forces in our culture that can foster, distort or destroy the Kundalini meme. Governments may wish to protect their citizens from the stress of Kundalini. Regulations could hinder proliferation. Early-stage Kundalini experiencers could be exposed to artificially induced altered states of consciousness in hopes of attaining early enlightenment while controlling the stress. The techniques are suggested by Hutchinson in Megabrain.¹⁸ Treatment in an authoritarian "psychiatric hospital" might consist of an artificially induced NDE to get a quick fix of the debilitating syndrome. The advanced psychic powers achieved by Kundalini experiencers could be considered a military asset to be controlled.

Both the evangelists and the Ayatollahs could take up the airways or the sword against Kundalini as the spiritual trichotomy acquires a new parameter.¹⁹ Such interest would probably increase the proliferation of Kundalini in a manner analogous to burning or banning books in Boston.

The neuro-biologists may find in Kundalini something controllable by chemical or electrical treatment of the brain. Kundalini might be considered by the medical community as a mental disease covered by Blue Cross. The scientific community might find it a rich area for research into the nature of consciousness.

If the Kundalini experience is capable of being deliberately induced even in a minor form without years of sacrifice or months of stress, gurus of the New Age movement may spring up to teach Kundalini as they are now teaching Astrology, Numerology, Channeling, and Past-Life Regression.

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An awareness of Kundalini on the part of the medical profession could have an early effect. In our own lifetimes we have seen "hands-on healing" go from an esoteric mystery to an encouraged practice in hospitals²⁰, partly due to the books of Borysenko²¹, Becker⁵, and Siegal²². In hospitals it is called "therapeutic touch." In medicine, as in other scientific disciplines, the amount of knowledge is doubling about every five years. Any interest by the scientific community will enhance proliferation of Kundalini at an exponential rate. Physicist Rauschner's comment may be pertinent here:

I believe that we can not only demonstrate that psychic phenomena and the laws and content of physics are compatible with psi functioning, but that we can use physics principles to understand psi phenomena and the psychic data base will shed light on some of the current problems in physics.²³

"Kundalini" is in the dictionary. It is not much in college textbooks. It is absent in high school texts. If and when Kundalini reaches these forms of communication we can only speculate as to how and where it will be taught. A new scientific discipline seems to be arising which might be called The Nature of Human Consciousness. In such a discipline Kundalini could find a scientific home.

KUNDALINI AS AN ENERGY CONVERTER. Kundalini converts material energy into spiritual energy and enlightenment. In this regard it seems much like the NDE. Kenneth Ring reports a Gallup poll showing 5% of Americans have had an NDE. Enlightenment must be distinguished from other forms of human potential as the following oft-told story illustrates:

O Master what did you do before enlightenment?
I chopped wood and hauled water.
And now, O Master?
I chop wood and haul water.

It should be noted that before enlightenment both Gopi Krishna and Krishnamurti failed their college entrance exams. After enlightenment they did not return to become neurobiologists or nuclear physicists, or even doctors of philosophy.

The near-term impact of a growing number of enlightened individuals on global cooperation is pleasant to consider. In Shelldrake's terms, are we creating a morphic field of global consciousness? When can we look for the 100th monkey?

The conversion of material energy to spiritual energy is an on-going process right now with long-term significance. Most of the energy we use every day is chemical or mechanical and represents energy being degraded to a lower form of usefulness while people go onward and upward in capability and complexity. This is entropy and negentropy.

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Nuclear power companies have destroyed matter to put energy into human beings by heating our food and our bodies. Some of this is being converted to spiritual energy every day by all those on the path to enlightenment.

ENLIGHTENMENT AND FURTHER EVOLUTION. Depending on one's viewpoint, evolution began when God said "Let there be light" or at the moment of the Big Bang or both. After 15 billion years a life form is controlling its environment and has acquired consciousness. Evolution of man, of mind, of consciousness and enlightenment can go on for another 6 billion years before our sun runs down, while the expected life of the universe is predicted at 10³⁰ years. There is a limit to the amount of matter in the world, the solar system, and the universe. Will it all be converted into spiritual energy? Some thinking by scientists is as follows:

Physician Robert Becker: "...the perineural D.C. system could lead us...to the collective unconsciousness."⁵

Physicist Louise B. Young: "As mind becomes less and less dependent on matter, a collective mind is taking shape."²⁵

Eugene Mallove: "Mind emerged from the fabric of matter, and eons from now it may make all the difference."²⁶

Physician Michael B. Sabom: "Everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that a Spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe."²⁷

Physicist F. David Peatt: "...the operation of mind will have resonances to the transformation of matter and indeed the two will be found to emerge from a common ground."²⁸

Physicist Max Delbruck: "The feeling of absurdity evoked by the question 'mind from matter' is perhaps similar to the feeling of absurdity which we have learned to cope with to alter our intuitive concepts of time and space and quantum theory."⁶

Evolutionist Erich Jantsch: "God is not the creator but the mind of the universe."²⁹

Sages and scholars have commented as follows:

Gopi Krishna: "...religion is in reality the expression of the evolutionary impulse in human beings."⁴

Siegwalt D. Palleske: (summarizing Teilhard de Chardin) For Teilhard the entire process of creation is a spiritualization of matter."³⁰

Paul Brunton: "Spirit has evolved itself into matter and is evolving itself back into self-knowledge."³¹

At present, mankind's progress in converting matter into spiritual energy might be measured by the quantity and

quality of enlightened individuals it has produced, including Jesus Christ, Buddha, Mother Teresa, William Blake, and Albert Einstein. If this progress is evolutionary it is proceeding at an exponential rate. Before the universe runs down many billions of years from now, all humanity can evolve to such levels of enlightenment and far beyond. Assuming only continuing evolution at realistic rates where will we be in a thousand years, a million years, a few billion? To me it seems that we shall reach a point where we will have converted all matter into spiritual energy. Telepathy between all minds will be an achievement of the distant past. Similarly for mind over matter. Love will have reached a maximum. Our evolution will be complete. We will have become one with God. Like the slime mold cells which become one entity, we may have no alternative but to disintegrate and disseminate into many tiny units. And God will say, "Let there be light!"

¹Jose Ortega y Gasset, The Modern Theme.

²Random House Dictionary. 1966 Edition

³Renee Weber, Dialogues with Sages and Scientists.

⁴Gopi Kirshna, Kundalini: The Evolutionary Energy in Man. Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1971

⁵Robert Becker, The Body Electric

⁶Mac Delbruck, Mind From Matter

⁷Pupal Jayakar, Krishnamurti.

⁸Michael S. Gassanaga, Mind Matters

⁹Ilya Prigogine in Looking Glass Universe

¹⁰Rupert Sheldrake in Looking Glass Universe

¹¹Douglas Boyd, Rolling Thunder

¹²A Dialogue Between David Bohm and Krishnamurti

¹³Science, Sept. 16, 1988

¹⁴Maxine Singer on the Nov. 2, 1988 "Bill Moyer's World of Ideas" on PBS

¹⁵Lewis Thomas in Looking Glass Universe

¹⁶Richard Dawkins, The Selfish Gene

¹⁷Marilyn Ferguson, The Aquarian Conspiracy

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21 Joan Borysenko, Minding the Body, Mending the Mind

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26 Eugene T. Mallove, The Quickening Universe

27 Michael B. Sabom, Recollections of Death

28 F. David Peatt, Synchronicity

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KUNDALINI AS THE AGENT BEHIND PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

MICHAEL J. BRADFORD

It is likely that development of psychic abilities results from the effect kundalini has on the brain and nervous system. The self-discipline prescribed by Yoga is to develop character so that these abilities will not be misused. Paranormal abilities are seen as the manifestation of a new perceptive faculty becoming active in the race as a step in the evolutionary development of the brain.

In the past one hundred or so years there has been an unprecedented surge of interest and investigation into what are commonly known as psychic phenomena by both serious and casual researchers in the East and West. But despite the tremendous amount of time and energy that has been spent on this inquiry, it would seem that we have made little progress in determining the real cause underlying these strange phenomena. Perhaps the reason for this is that there is a fundamental flaw in the way the research into the paranormal has been approached, and it may be worthwhile to reconsider the entire field of study to develop new insights into the investigation.

The adjective "psychic" is defined by Webster's Dictionary as having the meaning "outside the normal sphere of physical science and knowledge," and the noun as denoting "a person apparently sensitive to non-physical forces." Phenomena of this type and people of this nature seem to have been a part of all known civilizations. These include the shamans and witch-doctors of primitive and aboriginal tribes, the oracles of ancient Greece, the Hindu and Buddhist holy men, and Jins of the Arabic world, the visionaries Nostradamus and Swedenborg in Europe, the mediums of the late nineteenth century and the channellers of our current day.

The formal research into psychic phenomena by well-recognized scientists began with the formation of the British Society for Psychical Research in 1882, and its counterpart three years later. Their investigations were directed initially into the occurrence of psychic phenomena attending trances held by mediums and were at first limited to qualitative studies of these events which were compiled into case histories. Other scientists began exploring the manifestations of psychic phenomena which sometimes attended hypnotism. The technique of statistical analysis was first used in card guessing experiments as early as 1884 by the Nobel Laureate Charles Ratchet.

The current century has seen a major landmark with the establishment of the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke University by William McDougall in 1934. The teaching of parapsychology has now become quite commonplace at universities throughout the Western world and the Russians have devoted extensive resources to the investigation of these phenomena.

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The attention given to this research by both the American and Soviet military is a testament to how seriously it is now being taken by both governments. Acceptance by the scientific community has also made great strides in the last two decades and the American Parapsychology Assn. has been a member of the American Assn. for the Advancement of Science for more than 15 years.

The more common types of psychic phenomena under investigation include telepathy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, pre- and retro-cognition, psychokinesis, levitation, remote viewing, dematerialization, psychic surgery, and out-of-body experiences. Other types now being studied include psychic photography, psychometry, dowsing, absent healing, and poltergeists.

THEORIES. Many different theories have been put forward to explain how and why psychic phenomena work. A review of some of these would be of value in gaining an overview of the current state of the field. Some of these theories are attempting to explain the phenomena in terms of our current knowledge of the physical world and others extend into realms that we can only speculate about.

Of the former type, the most comfortable theory was to explain psychic manifestations in terms of the already known energies of the electromagnetic spectrum. But this medium is obviously deficient for the purpose, as it is inadequate when applied to phenomena such as psychokinesis which involves manipulation of non-metallic physical objects or precognition, which transcends time, and also because psychic phenomena do not seem to be hindered by any kind of physical shielding such as a Faraday Cage, which blocks out most frequencies in the electromagnetic spectrum.

The existence of psychic phenomena has been postulated by several investigators as being the result of hitherto unknown sub-atomic particles, but these theories cannot be extended to cover all the varied manifestations that are known and have not gained any kind of wide acceptance. Other theories hypothesize the existence of additional spatial and temporal dimensions to account for certain of the phenomena, but, again, none of these theories have been developed to the point where they are comprehensive enough to cover all the various manifestations.

In the absence of any acceptable theory, others which extend into the realm of the mental and even spiritual have been devised. But the problem with these lies in the fact that at present our knowledge of both of these areas is so incomplete that no explanation which is both comprehensive and in some way verifiable has been found and widely accepted. This lack of a plausible theory, coupled with the seeming diversity of the various manifestations and the inconsistency in performances of psychics have made it very hard to overcome doubt in the minds of those in the established scientific community that the subject is a valid area for investigation.

Other theories center around the principle of a type of force, or forces, as the cause of the phenomena. If it is assumed that such a force or forces exist then it would have to be quite different from the known physical forces and would seem to be of such a subtle nature that we have not yet been able to devise any instruments that can accurately measure it. The question also arises as to what is the nature of the medium in which this force or these forces operate and how do they relate to the physical world that we perceive with our senses and their extensions--the measuring instruments used by science.

The non-physical nature of these theorized energies and the difficulties in their physical detection and measurement may eventually force us to the conclusion that quantitative methods which science uses to study the physical universe will have to be augmented by qualitative procedures for the exploration of non-physical realms. It may be necessary to proceed on the basis that the nature of the medium in which psychic phenomena function is radically different from anything we have encountered in the world of physical matter and even though gross verification of the existence of the force or forces behind the phenomena may eventually be possible, the advanced exploration of the more subtle layers of reality will have to be carried on by investigators in a more subjective manner than is now acceptable.

GENIUS AND REVELATION. When reviewing the literature on the subject of the causes of psychic phenomena, it is evident that very little consideration has been given to the role played by the physical brain and the nervous system in these manifestations. Although the inseparable link between mind and body has been repeatedly demonstrated by both psychology and medical science, it may have been a very serious error on the part of investigators to leave out of consideration the possibility that there is a physical difference between the brain and nervous system of a psychic and that of a normal person and that the mental capabilities shown by psychics are the consequence of this difference. This deficiency in the investigation of the phenomena may be attributed in part to the very limited understanding that we have at present of the way in which the brain and mind interrelate, but it might be useful to assume that a factor of this type exists when trying to determine the cause of paranormal phenomena.

Perhaps another serious deficiency in the investigation of these phenomena has been the failure to include certain other manifestations which have been overlooked either because they are very rare or because they are not recognized as being in this same class. One of these is genius, or rather that form of genius which is characterized as the acquisition of knowledge as a result of a flash of inspiration, rather than the outcome of deductive reasoning. There have been many well-documented examples of these intuitive flashes which are very difficult to explain by the current

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theories of brain functioning, as they seem to involve the acquisition of knowledge of some external source.

Another important phenomenon which has been overlooked is what is known as "Revelation" or "Divine Inspiration" as it is also called. It cannot be doubted that the so-called revealed texts of the great spiritual traditions of the world, which are generally regarded by their adherents as being the direct result of Revelation, have in the past had an effect on the thinking and actions of the race that is incomparable with any form of intellectually derived knowledge. And this is perhaps true to some extent even today, where the thirst for explanation for our existence is still very much alive and flourishing in a substantial proportion of the population, despite the fact that the current generation has been born and raised in an environment where science and technology have been held supreme. These extremely powerful tendencies in the human mind, which know no bounds of culture or race, are quite possibly the source of our thirst for the paranormal. So instead of dismissing them as pathological states, as has been done recently, would it not make more sense to treat them as an important factor in the manifestation of paranormal events?

The major difficulty in studying the phenomenon of Revelation lies in the fact that there have been no recent examples of true Revelation which have become quite widely accepted and as such we have not been able to observe it at first hand. Investigation has been limited to studying secondary accounts written long ago by people who had little or no scientific knowledge. It is also an unfortunate fact that the validity of the phenomenon has been put into serious doubt in the minds of many honest investigators by the recent upsurge and subsequent discredit of many modern so-called "Spiritual Masters."

If it is the case that all of the above-mentioned manifestations are in some way related, then we must try to determine what the nature of this link is and what the laws are by which it operates. The fact that all through the observable physical universe natural phenomena are invariably ruled by rigid and precise laws would make it seem reasonable to proceed on the basis that the world of mental phenomena should also operate in a similar fashion. Where then can we turn for clues which may help us in solving this riddle? Since none of the approaches used recently have yielded a comprehensive answer, and since paranormal phenomena have been a constant feature of human civilization throughout recorded history, it might be worthwhile to reexamine the esoteric traditions of the past for information which may shed more light on this problem.

If a quick survey of these traditions is done, it will soon become apparent that the most thorough and systematized formulation of knowledge of the subjects of mind and consciousness is contained in the ancient systems of Yoga that were developed in India since the time of the Indus Valley civilization. The development of Yoga as a science of the

mind was carried on without break literally for millennia, and the largest body of writings available anywhere in the world on the subject of consciousness and its relationship to the physical body comes from this civilization.

YOGA AND THE PARANORMAL. For thousands of years, the Indian systems of Yoga, designed to arouse kundalini, have claimed that one of the consequences of the awakening of this mechanism is the acquisition of paranormal abilities. For example, Patanjali, in his classic work the Yoga Sutras, devotes the entire third Book to descriptions of the paranormal powers, called siddhis, which are said to be acquired by the practitioner who achieves a sufficient degree of success.

The fact that success in Yoga was always equated with the acquisition of psychic faculties and paranormal ability, not to mention entry into realms of consciousness vastly superior to these accessible to humanity in general, should be adequate justification for a thorough investigation of the efficacy of the Yogic practices in the development of psychic abilities.

In Yoga theory, these abilities are considered to be latent aspects of our subtle or higher natures which may be developed into active abilities through the physical and mental disciplines outlined in Yoga practice. The arousal of kundalini is said to be central to this process and it is quite likely that the development of psychic abilities is a direct result of the effect that kundalini has on the brain and nervous system. In addition, it is also held that much of the intense training in self control and self-discipline prescribed in Yoga is oriented towards the proper development of character so that these abilities will not be misused to the detriment of the practitioner and others.

There are several aspects of Yoga which would merit serious consideration in this regard. The first is that the most complete and systematic forms of yoga, i.e., Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga, and Kundalini Yoga, place tremendous emphasis on physical development. The necessity for a strong, healthy body and a pure nervous system was a fundamental fact of life for those who aspired to success and the incredible lengths that were gone to in developing total control over the digestive, circulatory and nervous systems, not to mention the mind itself, make it clear that the teachers of the science believed that the physical body played a crucial role in the development of more advanced mental faculties.

Another intriguing fact is that there were many systems of Yoga which were developed and some of them had very different methods by which they were practiced, i.e., Karma Yoga (selfless service), Jnana Yoga (discrimination), Bhakti Yoga (devotion), etc. Above all, though, a healthy, virtuous, moderate way of life was invariably prescribed, with the emphasis on self-control and a strong desire for union with the so-called Universal Consciousness, the ultimate goal of all Yogas. But another fact that should be consid-

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ered is that success in the venture was always rare in relation to the number of people who undertook the discipline and many who spent their whole life in total devotion to the practice did not necessarily achieve success. It would seem that there is a factor which is rooted in the basic constitution of the individual which has a bearing on whether or not the transformations in consciousness sought after can be achieved.

These three aspects of Yoga--the attention to the physical, the varied nature of the practices and the inherent constitutional factors--all tend to indicate that there is a natural process in the body which leads to the development of paranormal faculties of mind and that spiritual disciplines in general and Yoga in particular are systems which are designed to enhance and accelerate this process through the awakening of Kundalini.

PRANA. For an answer to the question of how these higher faculties of the brain become developed, we may again turn to the ancient discipline of Yoga. A cursory study will soon show that the whole philosophy of the science revolves around the concept of a subtle life-energy called prana, which is held to be the fuel by which the nervous system and the brain are powered. The mechanism by which the flow of prana reaches the brain is kundalini and the entire discipline of yoga is, in fact, designed to stimulate the mechanism of kundalini to a more active state of operation in which the quantity and quality of prana reaching the brain is enhanced. The increased upward flow of this energy is coincidental with the opening of the center in the brain, called "Brahmarendra" and prana acts as the fuel which powersthis newly opened conscious center.

The various physical aspects of Yoga practice, such as pranayama (control of the intake of prana through the breath) asana (posture) concentration, etc., would all seem to be designed to enhance and regulate the flow of these energy to the brain so that a transformation in consciousness becomes possible. Assuming that the existence of prana is a fact, the key to gaining an understanding of how the brain can function at levels above and beyond the normal is to discover how to detect and measure the flow of this energy in the body.

If all these factors are taken into consideration, there is almost certainly ample justification for basing an investigation of the paranormal on the detection and study of prana--at least as an initial step. Of all the theories that have been put forward so far, the idea of a natural mechanism in the body enhancing the mental faculties leading to the development of paranormal abilities and enhanced consciousness seems to make the most sense. The major stumbling block then, would appear to be the reluctance of science to regard consciousness as anything more than an epi-phenomenon of the brain. Until this attitude changes, there is little likelihood that much real progress will be made.

CONCLUSION. But it would also be good to consider the ramifications of the development of methods to enhance paranormal faculties in the population in general. Given the present condition of the human race, characterized by unbridled commercialism, squandering of natural resources, destruction of the environment, abuse of power, uncontrolled aggressiveness and greed for wealth, it is frightening to think of what might happen if methods for the development of paranormal faculties become common knowledge. The potential harm that could come from the abuse of these abilities is so great that before we surge ahead with any kind of research, we should first stop and consider the consequences of our actions.

Of all the great spiritual traditions of the past there is none which encourages the development of paranormal abilities for their own sake. On the contrary, many teachers, such as the Buddha, openly condemned them as being hateful to our development. Instead, they place the emphasis on living a virtuous way of life and gaining knowledge of the Self. The development of paranormal capabilities as a natural part of the process of spiritual advancement is the only safe and sure way--both for the individual and for the race.

It should always be kept in mind that when we are dealing with kundalini, we are dealing with an agency that is said to be vastly more intelligent than we are. To think that we can wrest secrets of the paranormal from it, for the purpose of exploiting them for our own benefit, as we have done with the physical resources of the planet, is both foolish and dangerous. Perhaps the reason that we have made so little progress so far in research on the paranormal is that we may simply not be ready to handle the responsibility that goes with such power. Until the mental soil is ripe, the seeds of knowledge will not be permitted to grow.

Perhaps the best course would be to follow the guidance of the great spiritual traditions and concentrate our energies on the exploration of our inner beings and the development of our moral and ethical natures. The acquisition of paranormal faculties as a natural part of this process would be far more preferable than developing them for their own sake. This attitude, far more than any chosen research method may be the real key to unlocking the secrets of the paranormal.

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PAUL BRUNTON AND KUNDALINI

Kenneth Thurston Hurst

The author, who is the son of the late Dr. Paul Brunton, shares the teachings of meditation and kundalini taught him by his father, beginning at the age of nine. He discusses his daily meditation exercises that regularly arouse his kundalini serpent power and his father's writings that tell what kundalini is and what it does.

Why did so many primeval cultures in Asia, Africa, and America worship the serpent? A full answer would contain some of the most important principles of metaphysics and one of the least known practices of mysticism--raising the force symbolized under the name of the "serpent fire." The advanced occultists of Tibet compare the aspirant making this attempt to a snake which is made to go up a hollow bamboo. Once aroused it must either ascend and reach liberty at the top or it must fall straight down to the bottom. So he who seeks to play with this fiery but dangerous power will either reach Nirvana or lose himself in the dark depths of hell. If a man seeks to arouse kundalini before he has ridden himself of hate, he will only become the victim of his own hatreds when he does raise it from its sleeping state. He would do better to begin by self-purification in every way if he is to end in safety and with success. The uprising of the penis closely resembles the uprearing of the cobra. Both become erect and stiff by their own innate force. When the serpent fire passes from the root of the penis up the spinal cord, the latter also becomes upright and stiff.

Yet sex is not the serpent power but the chief one of its expressions. The advanced yogis of India symbolize by the pent-up hissing of the serpent the aggressive energy of this sex power. They picture the threefold character of the process in their texts as a triangle with a serpent coiled up inside it. The intense fire of love for the higher self must be kindled in the "mystic" heart, kindled until it also shows a physical parallel in the body, until the latter's temperature rises markedly and the skin perspires profusely. Deep breathing is an important element in this exercise. It provides in part the dynamism to make its dominating ideas effective. The other part is provided by a deliberate sublimation of sex energy, through its imaginative raising from the organs in the lower part of the body to a purified state in the head.

"The strange phenomena of a mysterious agitation in the heart and an internal trembling in the solar plexus, of sex force raised through the spine to the head in intense aspiration toward the higher self accompanied by deep breathing, of a temporary consciousness of liberation from the lower nature, are usually the forerunners of a very important step forward in the disciple's inner life. A twofold trembling may seize him. Physically, his diaphragm may throb violently, the movement spreading like a ripple

upward to the throat. Emotionally, his whole being may be convulsed with intense sobbing. It is this same bodily agitation, this nervous repercussion of a higher emotional upheaval, which developed in the meetings of the early members of the Society of Friends and got them the name of "Quakers."

"The agitation of his feeling will come to an end with the calm perception of his Soul. The kundalini's activity being primarily mental and emotional, the diaphragmatic tremors and quivers are merely its physical reactions. The necessity for keeping the back erect exists only in this exercise, not in the devotional or intellectual yoga, for such a straight posture permits the spinal column to remain free for the upward passage of the "serpent fire." The latter moves in spiral fashion, just like the swaying of a cobra, generating heat in the body at the same time. If the trembling continues long enough and violently enough, a sensation of heat is engendered throughout the body and this in turn engenders profuse perspiration.

"But all these symptoms are preliminary, and the real mystical phenomena involving withdrawal from the body-thought begin only when they have subsided. This exercise first isolates the force residing in breath and sex, then sublimates and reorients it. The results, after the initial excitement has subsided, are (a) a liberating change in his consciousness of the body; (b) a strengthening development of the higher will's control over the animal appetites; and (c) a concentration of attention and feeling as perfect as a snake's concentration on its prey. It is a threefold process yielding a threefold result. In those moments when the force is brought into the head, he feels himself to be liberated from the rule of animality; then he is at the topmost peak of the higher will. Power and joy envelop him. The attainment of this state of deep contemplation and its establishment by unremitting daily repetition bring him finally to an exalted satisfied sense of being full and complete and therefore passion-free and peace-rooted."

I have been quoting from Volume Four of my father, Paul Brunton's, published notebooks. My father's given name was Ralph Hurst but he changed it to Paul Brunton in 1933 when he started to write books on spiritual subjects following a career as a journalist. His early interest in meditation, philosophy, and the spiritual quest then became the sole focus of his writing and research. His first book, A Search in Secret India, in which he introduced the Indian sage Ramana Maharishi to the West, was an instant success. Between 1934 and 1952 he wrote eleven books. These included A Hermit in the Himalayas, A Search in Secret Egypt, and The Hidden Teachings Beyond Yoga. Back in the 1930s how strange the terms yoga and meditation must have seemed to Westerners; yet today they are commonplace.

In the mid-50s my father withdrew from public notice to intensify his own spiritual practices. This withdrawal was so effectively accomplished that two different obituaries

appeared in major newspapers. But he continued to write daily for posthumous publication. He died in July, 1981.

And then began the monumental task of arranging and publishing his collected notebooks. Some seventy notebooks were filled to overflowing with page upon page of single-spaced type on precariously thin paper. The notes were difficult to read and the sheer volume--more than 7,000 total pages--would have overwhelmed any publisher. How what once filled two suitcases and most of a trunk were finally converted to a computer disk no larger than a video cassette is another story. To ensure the successful completion of the project and to remove it from being a commercial venture, I established the Paul Brunton Philosophical Foundation. I turned over all the notebooks' copyrights and waived all royalties.

And now all the notebooks have been published as a set of sixteen volumes and are available in both clothbound and paperbound editions. Today we are concerned only with Volume Four "The Body"--and indeed only with chapter eight which deals with the subject of kundalini.

Dr. Brunton recounts in clear straightforward language exactly what Kundalini is and what it does.

"The region of the solar plexus is a sensitive receiving set into which the emotional forces of the lower nature can, by concentrating with the mind, be drawn. Here they are purified and driven upwards by a determined will and a deepened breath to the region of the heart. If this is successfully done, the Spirit Energy may be aroused, with momentous consequences. A sense of well-being will be diffused through the trunk of the body and a feeling of happiness will arise in the emotions themselves. The power which is felt is what the Hindu calls KUNDALINI, and it is gradually generated over the many years through which he practiced meditation and sublimated sex. Usually when allowed to pass out of the head it leads to a spiritual experience of ecstatic illumination, but of course that can be done only when it is accepted without fear and in full faith.

"The serpent fire starts at the sex organs, proceeds to the solar plexus as the most important ganglion of the sympathetic nerve systems, continues up the spine and ends in the frontal brain. These are the progressive stations of its passage when governed by will and directed by aspiration. The first sign is an increase of the heat of the body, sometimes resulting in perspiration. The second sign of its movement is a trembling or agitation in the navel region of the abdomen as the solar plexus is entered and the magnetic centre within it begins to open. The third sign is an unconscious drawing of deeper breaths. The last sign is a sensation of added force on all levels--physical, emotional, mental, and mystical."

Paul Brunton and Kundalini

Now I will share with you some of my own personal experiences with Kundalini. Being of a private nature, I would not normally dream of revealing them in public, but in the interests of contributing to a great understanding of Kundalini (which seems to be, I might add a much misunderstood subject) and to the purposes of this conference, I shall proceed to do so.

My father had instructed me in meditation when I was only nine years old. He showed me how to sit crosslegged in the lotus position, to quietly go within myself concentrating on the sound of repetitive words like "Peace", "Joy", "Love", etc. Soon I would imitate him in chanting "Om Mani Padme Hum"--which he explained to me was a way to engage the gods' attention, to notify them that one was trying to contact them. He explained that meditation was simply a method of quietening down and being attentive so that one could become aware of God's presence within. "It's always there," he said, "a silent witness, always waiting for us to pay homage to it." Meditation seemed a very normal pursuit to me then, yet something held me back from discussing it with my school friends.

A few years later, while my father was away on his travels in the Orient, I found myself wondering about death, even to the extent of lying still and withdrawn for over an hour. I imagined myself a corpse--and wondering what happened to the real "me" then.

But then puberty came along and the normal preoccupations of a teenage school boy took over.

My interest in the spiritual life rekindled with the coming of the war years. And at the end of the war I experienced what my father later told me was a "cosmic glimpse." I had lain down on a grassy verge and gazed up into the sky at the stars making their appearance when suddenly it was as though I were perched on the arc of the planet earth, as though it had shrunk and pulled away from me--while I was being drawn up into the vortex of the sky, drawn into a whirlpool of gyrating stars and planets rushing helter-skelter around me while their primeval sounds boomed into my consciousness. I lost all awareness of my physical body and it seemed to me that I was one with the universe. Now whether or not this experience falls into the category of Kundalini I am not qualified to assess.

But my father told me about Kundalini some ten years later. "You know the Trinity of the New Testament" he said. "Well, the Father represents God," the World Mind, the Creator of the Universe; the Son is God's deputy resident in each of us, the Overself; and the Holy Ghost is the spirit power of Kundalini. He described Kundalini as being akin to electricity; both are extremely powerful forces which can be used for either positive or negative purposes. Just as electricity can be harnessed to provide so many modern conveniences and yet, improperly handled can cause electrocution, so can Kundalini lead us to great spiritual heights

or, alternatively, can cause much physical and mental damage." It is literally the fable of the genie in the bottle," he said. "If you let the genie out and are not qualified to keep it under control, then watch out!" He explained that as the kundalini power rushes through one's nervous system it automatically seeks out any weak points in one's character and, because of its power, magnifies them. For example, if a man is subject to lustful tendencies, then the Kundalini will render him obsessed by sex and driven wildly to satisfy his urges.

Again, I quote from Paul Brunton's Notebooks, Number four:

Those who awaken this energy before they are in a position adequately to control it, put themselves in peril. For should they yield to temptation and misuse it to serve their lower nature or to harm other persons, it will return like an Australian boomerang to punish them.

My father continually issued warnings about the dangers of students arousing Kundalini before they were morally ready or without the guidance of an experienced teacher. And so I pass along these warnings today.

Now at the time my father was telling me about kundalini, it was in the summer of 1953. I happened to be undergoing a career crisis. I had given up a good job in the mid-west and come to New York to crash the big league--and was getting nowhere. I spent nine months job hunting, and I was getting discouraged. In fact, one day I said to my father that I was so down that I felt like walking down 42nd street right into the river. "Oh, don't be silly!" he replied. And then he proceeded to teach me a valuable lesson. 'Visualize the right job for you, that will give you a sense of achievement as well as good remuneration, visualize it existing out there and you are drawing it into your life. Know this to be so...and affirm it several times a day.

Then, he went a step further. "Kundalini can help a man in his professional career, too," he said. "It can enable him to concentrate his mental powers to fullest effect, like a magnifying glass harnessing the sun's rays to set fire to a piece of paper, and thereby help him achieve more and be successful. But there is a price to pay. It's necessary to discipline oneself to be chaste for an extended period and to sublimate the sexual energy and to steer it upward." He also told me about Tantra Yoga and its philosophy of 'By that which we fall, so shall we rise,' and how its adherents preserve their semen inwardly and sublimate it for occult or spiritual purposes. When I expressed interest in attempting this experiment, he showed me how to visualize drawing up the semen from the groin to the next chakra at the solar plexus and thence through the succeeding chakras, accompanied by deep slow steady breathing, up through the head. I was then to mentally direct this energy into the area I desired it, namely that of general success in business.

Suffice it to say that after some weeks of this particular meditation I secured an excellent position in publishing and very quickly went up the corporate ladder. (I might add that this period of chastity ended when I met a young lady whom I desired to marry!) But the business success momentum was there. I felt that I could achieve anything. I was interested to discover in my father's notebooks the following paragraph which pertains to this particular subject.

"The Sacral Plexus, at the spine's base and in the pelvic region, stores procreative power. If that power is stored for a sufficient length of time, and if it is undisturbed by sexual passions and kindred emotions during that time, and if there is a deliberate redirection in higher channels, whether it be the strengthening of the body and development of its muscles or the achievement of professional ambitions or the unfoldment of spiritual qualities, transmutation will take place."

My father told me of several well known people whom he felt were utilizing this power of kundalini--whether consciously or unconsciously.

Thirty years passed...And I did not practice kundalini although I continued to meditate daily, and I had other paranormal experiences. Then a few years ago I noticed an involuntary arousal of kundalini and this has become a frequent feature of my nightly meditation period.

"All meditation is really about is offering ourselves to be taken over by the higher power to realize the world from its viewpoint for a few seconds or minutes. The higher power is ever present, always there, just as electricity is all around us but we have to make the connection and plug in to derive any benefits from electricity. So we have to tune in to the higher power by affirming that it exists, acknowledging it as our creator and opening ourselves up to it. Then if we are fortunate we feel its power gripping us during meditation--literally gripping us and drawing us upward physically to a point of consciousness above and behind our physical head at the same time we become aware and behind our physical head at the same time we become aware of it, the hidden observer, and we have a taste of its unlimited power.

"Accompanying this elevation of one's center of consciousness one often feels a churning in the groin signaling the kundalini starting up as the historic serpent unwinds and begins its upward climb. Then if one is fortunate, one finds that one's viewpoint is also altered and elevated and one sees life, persons, and events from that of the viewpoint of the hidden observer. The ego is temporally subdued and no longer camouflages the reality of things. We see them as they really are. And this without excitement or emotion, hardly even of feeling, a calm, dispassionate understanding that brings with it a deep sense of peace."

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My father refers to this, and I quote from his notebook:

"What the Hindus call KUNDALINI, meaning the 'coiled force,' is really a manifestation of the power of the Over-self. It does not necessarily have to appear in the case of every progressing disciple; but where it does, it is as if an uncoiled force moves rapidly up the spine and passes out through the head, whereupon the meditator involuntarily enters the deep trance condition for a while."

Following such a meditation wherein my kundalini is aroused, I usually find that I am perspiring heavily around my head and neck. Sometimes my whole body vibrates with a tingling sensation. I wonder if John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was referring to a similar experience when he described "a strange warming of the heart?"

I think we should be quite clear that kundalini is a self-generated force coming up the body from below through the head and is not to be confused with the life force which enters through the head when used for healing and regenerating the body; this is an outside force. But kundalini is an internal force which is why the posture of crossed legs, the lotus position, is taught to meditators in the Orient to lock in and enkindle the kundalini from within.

I would like to summarize by again quoting from Paul Brunton's Notebooks in kundalini:

"The Indian yogis have named it variously: the Serpent Power, the Snake Force World Energy. The Christian mystics have named it the Holy Ghost and the Pentecostal Power. To the monks of famed Mount Athos, it is "the Athos Light;" to Saint John it was "the light of men;" and to Saint Luke, "the light of the body." The Chinese mystics have named it the Circulating Light.

It is really nothing other than the soul's Energy, the dynamic aspect of the still center hidden deep in man. Its first activity is traceable in psychical and intuitive experience outside the normal range as well as in abnormal physical phenomena; its final one is the supreme mystical experience which throws out awareness of the body altogether.

"The seven chief endocrine glands of the human body are associated with psychic centers in or near the spinal structure not visible to the physical eye. When the "Spirit Force" is brought by the power of aspiration into the first center, which is associated with the sacral gland, the body's vitality is markedly increased and its resistance to disease correspondingly increased too. The Hindu's texts picture it under the symbol of a lotus flower with four luminous petals.

"With the entry of this energy into the second center, associated with the prostate gland in men and the ovarian

gland in women, the nervous system is strengthened, resistance to nervous disorders correspondingly increased, ability to concentrate mentally enhanced, and a resolute determination to rise up and succeed in some chosen endeavor manifested. In the third center, associated with the adrenal gland, the power to influence other people's minds and even, to some extent, to heal them of sickness is developed. Along with this, the quality of fearlessness shows itself to an extraordinary degree. In the fourth center, associated with the thymus, the "Spirit-Energy" ascends to the region of the heart and with that consciousness touches a higher plane of being. There is a progressive thinning down of egoism. With the fifth center, associated with the thyroid gland, the emotions are at least balanced by, and poised in, the intuition. Along with this development, the illusion of time is banished. This gives a feeling of agelessness. Physically it bestows an improved power of speech in the sense that it becomes creative, forceful, and illuminating to its hearers. With the sixth center, associated with the pituitary gland in the frontal region of the head, creative power is bestowed upon the concentrated will and the spoken or written Word. With the seventh center, associated with the pineal gland at the base of the brain, the illusion of the ego's reality is shattered, and the pure self, or soul, is discovered. The ancient Indian books symbolize it in the form of a lotus with one thousand petals. The immense contrast of this with the small number of four at the first center is intended to show that here at last is full and final illumination."

Now I am by no means an expert on kundalini, and I do not why here my father describes the kundalini as progressing from chakra to chakra whereas earlier he wrote that the force moves rapidly up the spine--which indeed is my own experience in meditation. Nevertheless, of one thing we can be sure: that kundalini is the active power of God in this place of Experience. May the force be with you!

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PARANORMAL ABILITIES: ARE THEY
BOONS OR OBSTACLES ON THE SPIRITUAL PATH?

Bonnie Greenwell

A variety of yogic perspectives regarding paranormal activities are explored and various questions concerning such experiences are considered. Sources include yogic and tantric literature; the writings and biographical stories of modern yogis; and reports of subjects known to the author

What exactly is the relationship between kundalini activity and paranormal experience? Perhaps because knowledge of kundalini has for centuries been deemed the purview of secret and esoteric doctrines, the equally mysterious powers of the paranormal have been frequently linked with its energy. If kundalini could magically transform the average person into a miracle worker, perhaps it would be the panacea for all the world's ills, so it is with noble hope we seek such a linkage. But one would expect, were this the case, that yogic literature and spiritual teachers would emphasize this point as an inducement for learning yoga and meditation, and demonstrate such talents broadly in order to sell enlightenment to the masses. Instead there is only slight allusion to the paranormal in yogic literature, and the vast majority of spiritual teachers speak of the siddhis or powers of yoga as obstacles for those who would seek self-realization. These are the questions I will explore in this paper--does kundalini imbue one with paranormal powers? Why might this be down-played so extensively by most masters? And what, if anything, should be done if occult abilities arise? Are they harmless diversions, gifts to an ailing society, or temptations to drive us away from our spiritual paths?

Many people who have reported the experience of kundalini awakening have also demonstrated paranormal powers such as psychic or healing capacities. They report out-of-body experiences, pre-cognitive awareness, being aware of synchronistic events, remembering past lives, channeling books or poetry, having psycho-kinetic experiences, seeing visions of alternative realities, and communicating with other dimensions. Advanced yogis have been observed walking on nails, water, or fire, and living underground with no air or food for extended periods of time. Sai Baba, a modern Indianguru, is said by many to have the power to materialize objects. There is evidence that several masters could transfer their bodies from one place to another, or be seen in two distant places simultaneously. Many of these abilities have been related to kundalini, yet in some cases they indicate mastery of concentration or energy rather than spiritual advancement, and in other cases they suggest natural abilities or permeable psychic boundaries rather than spiritual awakening.

Paranormal Abilities: Boons or Obstacles?

Although there are tantric yoga texts that emphasize the development of powers in the yogic tradition, most of the literature does not encourage it, and often one is warned that the desire for power or preoccupation with it diverts one from the true purpose of the spiritual path, which is union with God. Tantric scholar John Blofield wrote that some Tantric texts have attached lists of supernatural powers they generate, although he doubts such things should be taken literally because they are often secret codes referring to subtle levels of spiritual development. Some of these include powers to shrink or enlarge objects (including one's body), multiply images of the body, transmigrate the body to another place, and pass through fire, water, and solid objects. Blofield points out that one so spiritually advanced as to hold these powers would not be inclined to demonstrate them merely to satisfy curiosity, although there are occasional reports of such events in the records of Christian missionaries and others living on the fringe of Tibet.¹

Many Yogis warn against deliberate seeking of such powers. Anandamurti called occult power an ordinary power, which is believed to be supernatural by the general public only because they do not yet know the way to possess it. He said it is like gold, an ordinary metal, which is costly only because it is rare. He wrote:

When an aspirant wants occult powers he may or may not get occult powers, but it is sure that he will not get [cosmic consciousness and bliss]...If you want to get occult powers, go outer and outer; if you want Paramapurusa, go inner and inner and inner and inner.

Occult powers, like all other powers, are transitory, temporary in nature...as soon as you die, the occult power will be taken away from you. But Paramapurusa will remain with you even at that time, as that property is of a permanent nature.²

Another great mystic, Aurobindo, also warned that the seeking of occult powers is counter-productive to spiritual development. He said that such powers belong to inferior planes of activity and usually push seekers in directions which can prevent the experiences of the divine. He called connections with the astral plane dangerous because beings of this plane can often be hostile to the true spiritual life and offer powers and occult experiences in order to gain control over those who engage them. They can be misrepresented as divine powers, mislead, give wrong suggestions and distort the experiences of the inner life. On the other hand, Aurobindo acknowledged that when supranormal powers come naturally, following the expansion of consciousness in yoga, and are not directly sought-after, they do not have astral characteristics and can be used more safely.³

I am told that the teachings of Alice Bailey also mention these two aspects of the psychic, suggesting that if

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one awakens psychic ability prematurely and it is directed by lower centers, there can be many negative distortions and misunderstandings of the spiritual life.

It is important to emphasize that warnings against occult powers are intended to protect those who are genuinely seeking spiritual awakening or liberation. We must remember that the highest intent of yoga is to detach consciousness from all levels of identification with the human condition, so that awareness of the pure essence of being, the divinity or creative force behind it, can be experienced, and ultimately wear away egoic identifications, freeing one to be in the world but not attached to it. All preoccupations, whether they be for family, sexuality, or sensate pleasure, material gain or occult abilities are barriers to liberation. Becoming distracted by psychic abilities, fascinated by past-lives, or developing a following as a healer all have the capacity of throwing our focus back into human life with a gusto that will preclude our making progress towards the goal of liberation. It is clear from their biographies that most mystics have at moments experienced and utilized such capacities flowing through them, but have for the most part made no effort to promote or develop them. On the other hand, many psychics and masters of occult energies seem to lack that deeper wisdom and quiet peace that emanates from those who have fulfilled the deeper potentialities of their spiritual journeys.

It is no secret that occult powers can be learned and that most of the fakirs or those men who perform magical feats in India, are not God-realized. Indian and Tibetan-yoga psycho-physical exercises which center around breath control are used for purification of the body; the control of some of the body's fluids; and the cleansing of psychic channels which link the nadis and chakras in the subtle body. Through these exercises, which are practiced many hours daily for many years, pranic energy, ki, or chi is enhanced. This leads man to develop a knack for precognition, telepathy, and levitation. Some Tibetan yogis attain a state of trance which enables them to run long distances at amazing speed. Many learn practices which raise the body heat and allow them to sustain freezing temperatures. The once mysterious practice of fire-walking on hot coals has been duplicated in recent years by scores of Westerners in New Age seminars. The mastery of concentration and pranic energies to accomplish these feats is not the same thing as raising kundalini or experiencing God-realization, although such practices can lead to kundalini awakening.

WAYS OF ACQUIRING PARANORMAL ABILITIES. I have classified into four categories the kinds of people I have studied who have acquired paranormal or occult abilities: those who were born with them or acquired them spontaneously; those who learned them by training with teachers; those who appeared to awaken them along with kundalini; and those who are avatars.

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1) It appears that the most common ways of acquiring paranormal ability are to be born with it or to activate it spontaneously during adolescence or early adulthood. Many yogis would say people born with such a predisposition developed the ability in past lives. Often adults speak of psychic or paranormal experiences as children but such awareness disappeared as they grew older and became linear thinkers. According to a recent National Opinion Research Poll 67% of Americans report having experienced extra-sensory perception at least once.⁴ Many individuals have isolated and rare paranormal experiences such as psycho-kinesis, out-of-body experiences, and seeing auras or visions. Westerners who have reported going through kundalini awakening often report being natural psychics prior to the awakening experience, and for some their abilities expand after this experience. Swami Radha states that psychic ability develops within the realm of the senses and the mind is no more an aspect of kundalini than any other level of functioning (that is, kundalini used to mean all of life in its various forms, not a specific awakening or movement of energy). She equates the power to see and become all-knowing within your own life with the opening of the ajna or sixth chakra. She believes that this ability to be all-knowing allows one to understand others and to use part of one's mind to tap into others.⁵

The gift of healing is often reported as happening spontaneously following a major injury or near-death experience, or even following a dream or vision. I have heard healers describe a psychic experience where a healer from another dimension came to them and directed their activities, so that they became healers as an adjunct to their psychic gifts. Other healers I have worked with learned their practice through training with a variety of teachers. Again, although it is probable that kundalini awakening enhances one's ability to heal, it is not a prerequisite for the gift.

2) Secondly, if they have not come naturally, paranormal abilities can be developed as they are by the aforementioned Tibetans and in some Tantric yoga sects. Certain schools of Tantric yoga emphasize magic powers, which are generally developed through hatha yoga and pranayama exercises, repeating of mantras many thousands of times, visualizations and ritual. Again, it is mastery of pranic energy and concentration which develops such abilities. The ancient Hevaira Tantra⁶ is a compendium of magical spells which include formulas using staring gazes, secret signs, and mantras that can win one the favor of a maiden, petrify an enemy, bewitch an army into rigidity and halt the movement of the sun. It emphasizes the purification of the senses and five elements in the physical system through self-experience, and harnessing the thought and breath. The tantra clearly indicates that these processes are also used to awaken kundalini, so it is possible that much of the text is simply a secret code referring to inner practices, rather than a literal presentation of magic.

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There are also Westerners who teach healing methods, aura reading, past-life recall, astral traveling, and psychic development in more conventional ways, but often emphasizing mental concentration, awareness of energy fields, altered states of consciousness, imagery and breathing processes. It is clear that many forms of body therapy and breathwork as well as exercises such as Tai Chi, Aikido, and yoga intensify pranic energy or chi, and make it more tangible to people who never felt it before, so that it becomes possible for them to access natural healing capacities. Thus, it is that many people utilize psychic or healing abilities effectively without having awakened kundalini. Some of them do not even claim an interest in spiritual development.

3) A third way that occult abilities surface is through kundalini awakening. I have found that when this is the case among people who have no prior paranormal experiences, some will initially feel anxiety and distress. They do not want such powers because it feels uncomfortable, out of control or even crazy to use them. They are frightened of precognitive visions and dreams, hearing voices or having unfamiliar impulses to produce channeled writing. Others want to develop these abilities and seek out classes or teachers in order to learn how to channel them most effectively. Although psychic abilities and channeling from other dimensions may be a natural calling for some who awaken kundalini I have also seen the tendency for psychic expansion lead to problems for several people who believed themselves to be engaged in intensive experiences with college professors or neighbors who they thought were affecting them sexually or psychically. Later I will discuss the specific paranormal events which accompany kundalini and the psychological issues that arise because of them.

4) A final category of people who demonstrate occult abilities are certain fully developed teachers or avatars, such as Sai Baba, who appear to have natural paranormal abilities available at will, as if their consciousness is so merged with the divine that their thoughts easily become manifest and there is no barrier between the "real" and the "unreal" as the rest of us know it. These masters are said to be able to materialize objects, appear in several places simultaneously, dissolve their physical appearance, read the minds of followers, cure others by carrying their illness or their karma, and do other remarkable things far above the norm. At this stage the yogic warning of danger no longer applies, for a fully realized being is already living in the world of nonduality and liberation, has no personal needs or desires, and is not vulnerable to the egoic pitfalls of others. Such extremely rare beings have undoubtedly moved well beyond the kundalini experience, which purified and opened their body prior to their liberation, most probably in previous lives. Avatars are not ordinary men, but come into the world only to challenge others to see the divine. They are said to be born fully awakened. Their mastery of pranic energy is a step above that of the yogis for their intrinsic consciousness includes these powers. They have

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always been male, and considered God-men, Jesus is considered an Avatar in Eastern teachings.

It is important, as we examine the relationship between kundalini and the paranormal that we recognize that kundalini is not essential to the paranormal process. According to the Mother, the woman who took over Aurobindo's work when he retired from public life,, yogis understand the occult as a system of knowledge organized around precise principles that follow a precise process, which when applied brings predictable results. Such powers exist in the domain of the subtle body, which has senses more refined than that of the physical body. This is why intensifying prana, the energy of the subtle body, enhances their expression. Secret groups have existed in all ages that understood and trained themselves to use these capacities. They required that initiates undergo a lengthy intense discipline of self-development and self mastery. The Mother compared occult science to a chemistry applied to the "play of forces, the building of worlds, the handling of certain forces and contact with them involves risks which can prove harmless only if one keeps a cool and unshakable calm."⁷ It is probably that those who have natural occult abilities simply have fewer boundaries between the material and subtle body energy fields and/or a more natural ability to access, intensify, and direct pranic energies which are always active in the body.

Those who have awakened kundalini are sometimes exposed to these supranormal forces and if unprepared are hard-pressed to learn the science to deal with them. While engaged in the awakening process they can present many obstacles to the spiritual path.

REFLECTIONS ON THE EXPERIENCES OF KUNDALINI SUBJECTS. The most commonly reported paranormal experiences in those I have interviewed for my research, or seen as clients in my private practice are feeling a psychic connection with others, picking up the energy fields of others, healing, and discovering synchronistic events. Several reported distinct messages and guidance from another plane--a teacher or guru who aided them with advice during difficult passages of this process. Several reported remembering past lives while standing in settings where they had occurred, such as an ancient church or a village by the Seine.

I have talked with several people whom I would describe as suffering from a loss of psychic boundary, at least during some stage of this process. They feel invaded, influenced and/or controlled by others. This is one of the symptoms of kundalini which looks most suspiciously like paranoid schizophrenia, and can lead to major social and psychological difficulties. In several cases I have observed, the individuals were not well-differentiated psychologically before the kundalini awakening: that is, they had a fragile sense of self and minimal social and/or professional skills. One man was on an airplane and felt certain other passengers were zapping him with negative energy, which he had to de-

flect with ritualistic movements, leading to the delivery of a pantomimed karate chop to the groin of a fellow passenger. A young woman went through weeks of a psycho-erotic relationship with a next door neighbor without ever speaking to him directly to ascertain whether he was really involved, as she was convinced he was. Another client reported several college professors had seduced her psychically, causing her to be sexually aroused during class. It is difficult to persuade someone who is having such intense experiences that they may be projection, although they are aware enough to realize they should not discuss the subject with anyone because it is "weird."

Usually such experiences pass as the process moves into other dimensions of development. The intense effort to control sexual impulses which is advised by certain gurus in order to redirect the stream of energy from the muladhara into high chakra centers is not only a method of kundalini awakening: it is a protection in some cases from the intense projections caused by sexual arousal which can accompany kundalini. Intense sexual arousal is exacerbated by the psychic condition which causes boundaries to blur at times between oneself and others, so that one feels sexually out of control and linked energetically and psychically with someone else, often someone they do not even know. From my limited collection of cases I believe it is possible that people who experience intense sexual difficulties following kundalini awakening may have unresolved childhood or adolescent issues or repressed traumas related to sexual expression.

Many people with awakened kundalini report their body responding energetically whenever they are near someone else with awakened kundalini or responding emotionally to strong emotions of others. Therapists who have awakened kundalini report they can sense the energy in others and some learn through concentration to help others bring such energy into better balance. The entire system is more open, therefore more vulnerable. It appears to me that to the extent that unfinished psychological business and emotional conditions are not completely resolved or transmuted this blurring of boundaries makes it very difficult to recognize projections, and to retain a solid sense of one's personal center which holds one to a steady keel no matter what waves of events are buffeting the ego. People who react strongly to the energy of others have to find methods of clearing their energy fields, centering their consciousness and regaining their individual boundaries or they will feel constantly fragmented and buffeted by emotions not their own. Some report that if they sit in a room with negative energy they will become physically ill.

For many the softening of egoic boundaries of course opens the door to genuine psychic awareness, to recognizing patterns of possibility intuitively in others, to seeing energy fields and auras, to genuine telepathic communication and other commonly acknowledged psychic opportunities. Several subjects reported the ability to receive messages

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telepathically from people they are close to. One man reported communicating with a crow:

Walking on the beach at night I saw a crow pass over the moon, plying rapidly, about 60 miles an hour. I wanted a photo of it and focused my mental energy on communicating with it. It came back and hovered with wings outstretched before the moon, leaving immediately after the picture was shot...(Subject: Rob.)

A mature therapist who awakened kundalini in her fifties, but who had always had psychic tendencies, reported:

I see and hear entities when working with clients, and they give me advice about healing them. Once I smelled a Havana cigar while meditating, and looked up to see a big craggy Englishman. He dictated some information for his wife, who was a friend of a house guest of mine, although I did not know at the time that she was a widow. It made no sense to me, but when I told her his message the next day, she knew exactly what I was talking about...(Subject: Sarah)

Another interesting pattern of psychic connection frequently reported is an inner link with a guru, teacher or guide. Two women reported a consistent communication with a guide who required them to write autobiographies and evaluate their lives. In one case, the subject was told to burn the book after the process was completed. Direct messages from Yogananda, Gopi Krishna, Sai Baba, and Muktananda were reported by several people. One woman would smell perfume when Sai Baba was present.

Many subjects report hearing a voice, at least once, and this seems to be correlated with deep spiritual experience. One woman was awakened three nights in a row with the words "call to commitment" sounding in her ears. She has subsequently written and published three books which she says were channeled through her. Others report cryptic one or two words messages repeating over and over until their meaning is understood.

Although I have heard from several people of the ability to read the minds of others, find lost objects, and perform other psychic feats, of the ten people I interviewed in depth, only one followed such interests after her awakening, and she had established herself as a psychic before it occurred. Six out of the ten subjects reported precognitive dreams or visions occurring in their childhood, and one had experienced a psychic healing as a child. But most of these subjects were disturbed by the reactions of others when they attempted psychic readings of assistance and did not want to pursue this ability. One said she was amazed at how easily people would give their power over to her.

Popular psychic Anne Armstrong has described her kundalini awakening and subsequent abilities several times in front of public groups, and pursues her life work of teaching intuitive awareness and spiritual development to all who are interested. Other noted Westerners who demonstrate obvious psychic ability in their insightful work at seminars and have written or spoken of their spiritual awakenings are Brugh Joy, Carolyn Conger, and Richard Moss. Undoubtedly many other examples exist, which indicate that many who do awaken such abilities frequently use them effectively in their roles as teachers and therapists.

The risks of following this path, according to the yogis, are those of inflation, distraction from the final destination, the possibility of succumbing to the lure of financial success or the power that comes from the adulation of others. For followers, putting too much emphasis on "powers" may seduce one to follow a teacher who has developed such skills but lacks true enlightenment. On the other hand, the boon of such capacities is that they help a person to become especially insightful teachers, and demonstrate the range of potential that accompanies spiritual awakening, therefore making it more tangible and appealing to potential aspirants.

The gift of healing has often been attributed to kundalini. Several of my subjects reported healing either by using hands-on techniques which they learned in special programs or simply following an intuition drawn from deep inside. I heard one psychiatrist describe balancing a client's energy psychically. As I commented earlier many healing methods can be learned and used effectively without awakened kundalini--they simply require the conscious use of energy and/or breath and/or love. But certainly the arousal of kundalini in a system which is reasonably purified must intensify the capacity to bring forth all of these qualities. It is possible that genuine and dramatic forms of psychic surgery and healing occur through the mastery of kundalini energy, but I have not found any yogic literature describing a guru who practices such techniques, except on rare occasions. Tibetan lamas will make pills that they charge with psychic energy which are supposed to be very powerful. Krishnamurti is said to have healed a few times, but was not generally open to such demonstrations. Some gurus are said to have carried the illness of certain disciples. Many notable spiritual teachers have died from cancer, infection, and heart disease. There is no evidence that spiritual awakening can hold off bodily death. Although the practice of hatha yoga is reported to create healthier, more flexible bodies, and promote longevity and there are many long-lived hatha yogis. I do not see any significant correlation among the master and saints I have studied and the ordinary Westerners I have interviewed to suggest that kundalini awakening promoted longer and healthier lives. I believe that many people could do some level of healing if they were trained to be in touch with subtle body energies and that most who have awakened kundalini could easily develop such capacities if they wished. But the ability to be healed is

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frequently limited by karmic and personality considerations and thus the healer is limited.

Again the boon of healing is a service to those who suffer, and one might ask why it is not encouraged more in schools of yoga. But it could put obstacles in the healer's spiritual path. Perhaps the healer would become identified with the process or inflated by it or take it deeply to heart if it was not consistently effective. Some healers attract scores of needy patients, admirers and students and are kept too busy to deepen their spiritual practice. If healing becomes a distraction or a way of obtaining notoriety or financial gain, it is said to detract one from further spiritual development.

To a declared yogi there is only one goal--liberation. One way of considering this is through an analogy. Think of your physical and psychological being--all that you are--as a glass--of any shape or size. A container. The container holds within it water, representing the pure essence or energy of consciousness. In order for this water to have shape, form, or purpose it must be contained in the glass, which creates boundaries or purpose--you may be a water glass, a wine glass, a test-tube, a pitcher, a vase, a cooking pot, etc. As an ego, you believe you are the glass, the container, and the complex group of elements which forms its color, shape, and size. The ego is the force which is determined to hold the glass together, to gain prestige, security, love, and experiences for the glass.

Spiritual practices are aimed initially at helping one recognize the water contained within the glass, and ultimately at shattering this container, and pouring the water into the ocean from which it emerged, paradoxically dissolving and expanding consciousness. From a yogic perspective everything you do that gives you pleasure or pain, keeps you interested and engaged in life, strengthens the container. Every time you weaken attachment and increase dispassion you weaken the container and make it more possible to reunite with the source.

Through meditation one learns to recognize the duality of container and the water held within, and eventually to momentarily rest consciousness in the water, gaining insights and awareness, bliss, oneness with the primal source and peacefulness. This is like the earlier stages of samadhi or satori.

We might think of kundalini awakening as a charge of lightning which causes a crack in the container. The water is more highly charged. More consciousness can thus flow in and more spills out through the crack. If you think of water as energy, that is how kundalini feels initially--more charge, more flow, more instability, more possibility--flowing in and out. The intensity can vary greatly among individuals. If you stop to patch the container by adopting a strong interest, a purpose, a new ability you then strengthen the structure. For many of us this is probably a good

thing, and a natural part of the process. But for a few the goal is to merge into the ocean and to trust to the ocean to provide whatever new containers are necessary for any tasks it wants us to serve. This is liberation--to be part of the energy field freely and with no attachment, with no distinctions to hold on to. Every moment in time is the same as every other moment. There is only the joy and unfathomable peace of existence.

In reality the human must have a container or a vessel in which to exist--it in fact is the human existence. The self exists as an ocean of consciousness and bliss prior to such a container, which brings forth form from what is infinite and undifferentiated. For the liberated soul the vessel appears to be there, but the consciousness is not identified with it. The water has poured out of it into infinite awareness and can return to play a role or a service, but it is no longer bound to it.

Spiritual teachings which warn against preoccupations with supranormal powers are simply acknowledging that they, like all other aspects of human experience, are limited within the human condition and require identification with the body--either the material or subtle body. If the highest goal is liberation, one is advised to avoid this new attachment.

But most of us are not so close to liberation and struggle instead for integration and individuation. I think of this as knowing the glass and knowing the water in the glass and learning to exist with acceptance in either place, always knowing the other is there. This is the duality in which the ego lives. Each individual is compelled by their innermost being to create a unique path between both worlds until such time as they are complete with their work and can safely risk shattering the glass. Probably this final liberation is never a conscious act, but only an act of grace to which the recipient has surrendered.

When we look at the qualities of genius and creativity sometimes associated with kundalini awakening, it is easy to long for massive awakenings in order to heal our planet. Indeed, the survival of the species seems dependent on such movements. I think of this turning toward the healing of the planet as the recognition, long overdue, of the feminine aspect of god. In Hindu cosmology the feminine is the creation. Shakti or kundalini is the energy of creation, while Shiva is more clearly the formless or prior condition. All of the great gods of the Hindu pantheon have goddess consorts who bring into life the concept or principle they represent. One cannot exist without the other. Yoga philosophy holds that we must incarnate in a human body in order to become liberated. It is through entering creation that we ultimately achieve liberation.

I have come to suspect that after liberation comes new creation, comes the birthing of new forms, more refined forms. There is a continuing recycling of consciousness.

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Therefore it is not such a loss to postpone an interest in acquiring paranormal or extraordinary superior skill which we attribute to those who are fully awakened. All who are sincerely on this path become more sensitized to the environment, feel more compassion and recognition of the spark of the divine in all creation, and are less likely to reinforce the ego (as long as they stay willing to see it in themselves) through stances of power, greed, or hatred which create such misery in the world. That the planet needs wisdom, compassion, love, and creative methods of problem solving there is no doubt. But without liberation it is difficult to get beyond our personal biases and our personality and cultural distortions. We continue to look at the universe through our distinctive glasses. Each of us brings forth a unique gift, personalized by our own conditioning and genetic and cultural heritage. Those who have fully awakened kundalini may bring it forth more intensively or charismatically, with a scope of universal compassion and understanding that far surpasses the norm. But unless they are also liberated there may still be some distortions of perspective left over from their personality and egoic structure.

We need to avoid becoming believers, unduly impressed with supranormal or occult powers, and remind ourselves that such powers do not prove one has wisdom and spiritual understanding, but only that one has mastered certain skills. Belief in the powers of great saints has not helped Christians to experience liberation, but in fact tends to cause the worship of such saints to the detriment of self-realization. This is the process of an extraverted culture--to place such experiences outside of oneself. The fact is we are each obligated to engage our own spiritual search and ultimately accomplish our own liberation. The yogis and other mystical traditions, taught such a path as an alternative to "believing" and staying static in that condition.

When paranormal abilities arise spontaneously in the course of a spiritual path, those who experience them would best be advised to neither reject them nor become attached to them. Follow your inner guidance as to their purpose and service in your life. If they arise spontaneously and contribute to your overall spiritual well-being be grateful, but do not forcibly hold on to them. If they lead to distortions, inflations, and confusion they are not serving you in any way and it is best to wait for them to pass with as little action as possible. If you have psychic or healing inclinations you may want to take a course or two from someone who can teach you an appropriate model for understanding and channeling these energies.

But remember to measure such developments against the overall goal of your spiritual life because it is easy for power to overcome humility, skill to overcome surrender, and the desire for accomplishment to overcome the establishment of inner peace. The model the yogis have offered for those seeking genuine liberation is to use such powers sparingly, to put them in a modest perspective, and to continue

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resolutely to let go of all diversions which bind us to the egoic perspective, channeling our energy and consciousness toward the merging of the atman, the innermost soul, with universal consciousness.

¹J. Blofield, The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet. Boulder, CO: Prajna, 1970

²S.S. Anandamurti, Baba's Grace. Los Altos, CA: Amrit, 1973, p. 109

³Satprem, Sri Aurobindo or the Adventure of Consciousness. Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1979. p. 272

⁴L. Wilson, "Coming of [New] Age", San Jose Mercury News. April 1, 1989. p. 13C

⁵S. Radha, Kundlaini Yoga for the West. Boulder, CO: Shamala, 1978

⁶D.L. Snellgrove, The Hevaira Tantra--A Critical Study: Part I, Introduction and translation. Oxford, Engl: Oxford University Press, 1959

⁷Satprem, Op. Cit., p. 272

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KUNDALINI AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Charles C. Wise

The term "Kundalini" ought to be confined to Gopi Krishna's account of the actual serpent power, and ought not to be applied to all inspiration. In the Western tradition that which some treat as Kundalini can be characterized as revelation, mysticism, inspiration, or experience of the Holy Spirit. Selections are given from the author's channeled material.

Four friends were having dinner together. One was a sociologist, one a surgeon, another an engineer, and the fourth a lawyer. They were seated in a restaurant at a table which looked out over the city pavement. Seeing an unmistakable prostitute pass by, the sociologist remarked, "There, gentlemen, goes a member of the oldest profession." "Not at all," responded the surgeon, "there were no women until the rib, from which Eve was made, was removed from Adam. Obviously, mine is the oldest profession." "Hold on," said the engineer. "In the beginning God created the universe out of chaos. Engineering is indisputably the oldest profession."

Very quietly the lawyer spoke up. "Gentlemen, gentlemen. Mine is the oldest profession. Who do you think created the chaos?"

I have been a lawyer, now retired, for some fifty years but it is not my purpose this morning to create chaos. Those of you who have read James Gleik's book on the new science of Chaos know that it evolved from studies of turbulence. To question the reality of Kundalini before this audience will surely do that. I had thought at first to title this paper, "Kundalini and the Unmarried Mother, or a Bastard at the Family Reunion." But in reflection I decided that the Program Committee would not approve that, so my subject is "Kundalini and Enlightenment."

The concept of Kundalini comes from the Hindu-Yoga tradition, and is based on the theory of the Chakras. It posits a "serpent power," arising at the lowest Chakra, which can be evoked to flash up through the higher Chakras, gathering energy from each as it passes, until it explodes into the brain. A major modern exponent of this concept has been Gopi Krishna, who reports he received enlightenment from his personal experience of it. His disciples and others claim that all enlightenment, revelation, inspiration, creativity, and genius spring from this process, whether their recipients realize it or not.

To claim every good thing for Kundalini is arrogant nonsense. In my experience claims to exclusiveness are bigotry. If the term is as broad as it is being used by its exponents, it is ambiguous or it is nothing at all. As Paul

Pond would probably agree, not a person here has had the full Kundalini experience.

Is Kundalini a physical or a mental (psychical) experience? There is no basis whatever for claiming that the Chakras exist as organs or functions in the body. Some attempts have been made to identify the several Chakras with the ductless or endocrine glands, but this not been supported by any reliable scientific evidence. I feel the Chakras are symbols of various aspects of the energies available to our minds and spirits which are not physically produced. And I suspect that many of the Kundalini experiences recounted to me were misidentified hot flashes, not the psychic orgasms of Kundalini.

I submit that the ideas of the Kundalini and of the Chakras themselves are myths. This is not intended as a put-down. Joseph Campbell has stated many times that "myth is metaphor." The imagery of mythology is symbolic of spiritual powers within us. When these are interpreted as referring to historical, natural, or physical events, which science in turn shows could not have occurred, then the truth and power of the myth is destroyed. Kundalini is just one of many myths inspiring toward growth.

Enlightenment is an ineffable experience. It is also a psychic experience. It does not produce a uniform and detailed blueprint of reality which is the same for all who have this experience. It is unique and personal to each, and it is virtually impossible to convey any meaningful understanding of the experience itself in words. As one inspired old teacher once remarked, "It is like trying to unscrew the inscrutable." Furthermore, those who have had the experience do not really know how they brought it about, if indeed they did, or how to instruct others to obtain a comparable experience. So they usually offer a mythical explanation drawn from their own spiritual tradition, which will encourage and assist others in following their lead to reach the same goal, but which can be no guarantee that they will make it. Religious rituals were designed to guide the believers toward the founder's original enlightenment experience.

No one reaches a significant stage of enlightenment except after having practiced diligently some particular mental or physical discipline. Yoga has not proved congenial to me; it caused me too great a concern for the physical (position, breathing, control, etc.) and its silly exercises clouded my openness to spiritual insights. I found Buddhist meditation more helpful, but any discipline focused on self-development toward truth will do. The orientals use swordsmanship (Japan) and the other martial arts to lead ultimately toward maximal spiritual development. Meditation has been the way for Buddhist and Christian mystics. Sports are the yoga of the West. But while football, for example, can produce a Mr. Justice White or a Jack Kemp, it also leaves many with broken limbs and maimed bodies. Any discipline is useful in the soul search only if it teaches concentration on the ultimate goal to be desired. However, the yoga tradition

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does have the great merit of causing the seeker to search within rather than trying to acquire it without personal effort from someone or something outside.

The concept of Kundalini bears a curious and interesting resemblance to the ideas of Sigmund Freud. While we owe him much for the development of new insights into mental processes and for stressing the importance of the subconscious and unconscious elements of mind, I feel he was wrong in his basic assumption that the sexual urge provides the real motivation for life and that its sublimation is the power for all creativity. Freud, here, was also building a myth. In fact, life existed prior to sex. Unicellular life is sexless and immortal. Reproduction is by division and the two offspring are identical with the no longer extant parent. It is only after this stage that life made its two great inventions: bisexual reproduction and programmed death.

In thinking over these matters, I decided to consult an energy in spirit whom we in this area will call The Master. He proclaims himself to be a Tibetan who lived at approximately the year 800 of the current era, and who is brought through by a remarkable medium, Snow Chiarello, a nurse. He does not speak directly, but through any one of these oriental maidens resonant with the medium who tell us they are not discarnate spirits, but never lived, and are thought projections of the Master's mind. Through them, he and I have had many discussions and a few arguments, and I feel I have gained from him many remarkable insights. When I asked him about Kundalini and its possible dangers, he made the following comments:

M: You speak of the Kundalini. Kundalini is dormant in all of those who are existent in the physical encasement. Unless invoked with much training and care, it can be most destructive to the physical encasement. It can burn and destroy the physical brain cells. Many have been instructed in the higher schools of thinking for beneficial control of Kundalini, which is a passage--an energy train so to speak--to the higher consciousness. However, such violent motion is not necessary to obtain this. Kundalini is an explosive thing by nature, unless it is contained one chakra to the next. Each chakra must be opened, cleansed, and conditioned to accept vibrations in its proper channel.

Destruction of physical brain cells is most certain to occur, especially if Kundalini is not allowed to exit by the highest or crown chakra. If the crown chakra is not properly opened and conditioned, Kundalini then has no choice but to turn and proceed downward again through other channels and find its way back to its home at the base of the spine--doing damage to the entire nervous system, leaving the physical encasement very often

crippled, and leaving the senses distorted. Kundalini is not to be tampered with, without proper care, One of White Hair. Such knowledge, once again, is offered to those who seek. This is merely the first step. Perhaps those who seek, in this lifetime may never be granted entrance to the circle of beings who have such knowledge to teach. Why, you may ask, does this circle of beneficial knowledge, and the keepers of such, why is it not offered to the world--to improve living conditions, to enhance government, to perhaps control all of nature and all of consciousness existent upon your planet?

Abuse, by those who would suppress the weaker, more naive souls, the lesser developed. Therefore, the guardians of such knowledge must take great care before offering such. Now, higher intelligence is always on guard, seeking those who come in sincere request. "Request" perhaps is not a good word--request--how would you say, "in search of?" The inquirer--the mind which seeks in sincerity. Now the higher intelligence of the universe will find those who are sincere and, if not in this lifetime, will help them to incarnate again and again in a physical encasement more adaptive to that which can accept. For you see, with such knowledge and truth, there must be sacrifice. There must be cleansing and preparation of the consciousness. Your higher nature knows such, but the consciousness in which you must live your daily life commits not, and so you must deal with your everyday turmoil and overcome it, allowing not the higher consciousness to involve you in higher truth. Do you understand this?

W: I think so. At least you have told me whether I have been correct in not seeking the release of the Kundalini, but in depending on inspiration of the higher sources, independent of that physical charge.

M: Most true, One of White Hair. Unless the physical encasement has been prepared with much care, with much rigorous training, it would be unwise.

W: Lacking the proper preparation, can the Kundalini experience be something in the nature of an emotional hot pants or spiritual orgasm that is more likely to be destructive than helpful? Is it more likely to 'blow one's top' than to advance one spiritually?

M: This would be the feeling our Master would transmit to you: Not to involve yourself with that with which you are not familiar. Accept guidance

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by all means that feel right for you to such higher knowledge and such open experience, but the serpent fire of the Kundalini can be most violent.

We, in the West, have our own guides toward enlightenment. I have journeyed, except for a brief excursion into Buddhism, along the Christian path. If the swami sycophants and guru groupies had done more than scratch the surface of the Christian myth, they would not have had to shop around for exotic imports, but would have learned to look within themselves.

It is true that the Christian myth has been institutionalized and interpreted as historically factual, clearly to its detriment, and the belief in the "Only Son" of God, a church, a priest, or a book has been proclaimed as the necessary means for salvation. But within the Christian tradition there have always been mystics who realized that the Trinity was God, the Spirit, Christ (each one of us) the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the inspiration which constitutes communication between mind and spirits in attunement. They learned to search within for God and truth. As Paul said, "Christ in you, your hope of glory."

I have had some (to me) profound experiences of my own. I wish to share with you a message from what I feel to be the greatest energy source with which I have ever been in contact. It was not experienced as a power welling up in me from the crotch. There seemed to be an inpouring directly into consciousness of something far bigger than I. I had asked the universe for information on the real meaning of the incarnation of Christ. I made notes. Here is an explanation of the incarnation of Christ in terms of universal process, rather than historical event:

I am the Holy Spirit, Logos of the Greeks, Pre-existing Word, Growth Principle, God-in-action. I am the begetter of Christ.

As the Spirit of God, I am the builder of the world, the organizing element, unifier in multiplicity, and annihilator of diversity. I am the creative idea, the impulse to beauty, the revealer of hidden relationships, revelation in religion, comprehensive hypothesis in science, and unifying concept in society. I am intuitive vision, the spirit of inspiration, and the impulse to strive.

I am all God's angels, and the medium of communication between mind and mind: God with man, and man with man. Minds emerge from me and are one in me.

I have been called the Over-Soul, the Noosphere, Universal Mind, The Light of Man, The Hound of God, and extrasensory perception. I am the Creator's personality and His sense of humor. I

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am not conventional. I am that which is, that which will be, and the cause of that which was. I am God revealed in you. I AM THAT I AM.

When God the Creator made the World, I was with Him and in Him. And I went out from Him to brood on the face of the steaming waters and stir them to life. I led each tiny unfilterable virus, each bacterium and each amoeba, each loosely-organized hydra, into the ever-increasing unity in complexity that is evolutionary growth.

Without me was not anything made that was made. I am the urge to rise, the instinct for self-preservation, and the impulse to breed. Properly understood, God, sex, and evolution are one, and I am the connective.

It was I who spoke to Moses from the burning bush. When he observed the flame that burns but does not consume, he saw me and found the Way of Faith.

I led the Buddha to the Banyan Tree and on--through fifty years of ministry--along the Noble Eightfold Path demonstrating the Way of Good Works.

I was the familiar spirit who guided Socrates, and revealed to him the importance of concepts and the Way of Thought.

I was the will to order in Hammurabi and Justinian, showing the Way of Law; the inner strength and conscience of Marcus Aurelius, teaching him the Way of Duty.

And--above all--I am the Spirit which is the Father of Jesus the Messiah and the sons of God, revealing the Way of Love.

Before the World was, I conceived Christ. I was Christ, and Jesus of Nazareth is my best embodiment. Who was his earthly father? Did he have an earthly father? Certainly; who that father was is not important. It is not how Jesus came--but who and what he was--that is all-important. The Bible says all that is needful: He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of Mary in the usual way. He was at once Divine and truly human. His lineage is traced from David through Joseph. He as born of an unwed mother and he was God's son.

What is he now? Christ and I are one. We have always been one and one with the Father. I am one with you, your best potential self, the Christ in you which is your hope of glory. Where is Jesus? He died, was raised again, and lives, His spirit is my spirit and your Comforter.

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He was not lost. He is not dead. But he is changed. The very atoms of his body may be conceived as having been converted into pure spiritual energy.

You may think of him as sitting on the right hand of God or--if it helps you--as an important association center in the memory banks of the super-computer being programmed for the mind of the coming world organism that someday will more fully express God.

These are only concepts. They are not articles of faith, but they may serve as symbols to help you grasp the mystery that is Christ Jesus the Lord. Literal truth here is not important or possible. Jesus himself is not important, except as an aid to you to visualize--and realize Christ in you.

In some future time, perhaps the figure of God as Father and man as Son may lose its relevance, to be supplanted by a vision of God and man as unequal but joint partners in a common enterprise of evolving mutual development. Already, "The Lord is my Shepherd" loses impact as a symbol, as megalopolitan man loses contact with sheep.

Symbols will change. You must be prepared for the uncertainties of change, recognizing changes as opportunities for growth. I am ever changing; I am the cause of change.

God is not limited to one moment or one means. Christ was born in Jesus, and that is wonderful. But is it not wonderful also that, in a single life-span, God in me hovered near the nations of the Earth, and in a time of ferment spoke through men to all men in accents of power and great diversity?

Revelation was in the air, and great spirits in every land heard and reported. Not all heard alike. My messages--as always--were colored by their special needs, their temperaments and personalities. When I speak through a man his uniqueness is not destroyed. His voice adds melody to the sense of my words; we make music and sing together. There is truth in the diversities of the songs of prophets.

In early Greece, the great Pythagoras saw God in Mathematics and formulated principles of measurement that laid the ground work for all future science. His theorem: the square of the hypotenuse of all right triangles is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides, is a recognition of relationships known to more schoolboys that is Einstein's $E=mc^2$.

In a Judah split by exile lived three of her greatest prophets, true spokesmen for God. At Jerusalem, the angry Jeremiah sought by preaching and by statesmanship to save a nation bent on suicide. At Babylon, Ezekiel in early exile, nurtured hope by visions and silent sermons, boldly acted out. Through a ritual of separation, he preserved a Chosen People from oblivion. Also at Babylon as a rising Persia threatened her, the unnamed mystic Deutero-Isaiah, one of the greatest poets of the world, pronounced--in notes of joy--The Way of Suffering, showed that the Jews were chosen to witness and to endure, but not to rule and saw salvation in a Suffering Servant bruised for all mankind.

In vibrant Persia, gentle Zarathustra, last of the greatest of the Zoroasters, beheld a world at war between the Way of Light and the forces of Night. Evil he saw as real and personal, and took his stand with Ahura Mazda under the symbol of the Living Flame against the evil way of Ahriman. His followers led Persia on to greatness, released the Jews to build again their Temple, and traveled to the Birth at Bethlehem.

In God intoxicated India, lived Vardhamana known as Mahavira, "the hero," founder of the Jails, believers in reincarnation who hold all life as sacred.

There also Lord Siddhartha, Gautama the Buddha, Lord of the Lotus, vanquished desire, broke the cycle of necessity, taught the Law of Karma and the Noble Eightfold Path, and escaped from the Wheel of Life into Nirvana.

In China, then, Lao Tzu proclaimed in Taoism the mystic Way of Life; while Kung Fu Tzu, his young contemporary preached order and good form, acceptance of civic responsibility, and the Silver Rule of conduct: Never do to anyone what you would not have done to you.

In the Sixth Century before Jesus, these nine great spirits lived. One active man might well have met them all. Through them I shaped the world's religions. Christ and I are not limited to one historic breakthrough.

When you go on to reach the farthest stars and find there alien forms of intelligent life, when you have learned to meet them in peace and to communicate, you will find that they were not spawned beyond God's reach. You will discover that Christ and I--both basically ecumenical--have been there before you, that they too have been

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taught a knowledge of the true and the beautiful, and that they also have been journeying along the Ways of those who walk with God and know Christ's Way of Life although they know not Jesus. God's presence permeates and his values are built into His entire universe.

Have you found the Christ in you? Have you discovered yourself as a Son of God? In some strange way God wants you, needs you, and calls you to Himself.

I have conceived Christ in you and you in Christ. but your gestation period has been overlong. You are wasting my time--and yours. Come on out of your comfortable womb into the light and be reborn. Get with it!

The mass of your inertia is critical. I have set in place the detonator and have put the button under your hand. The wires are connected. It is up to you. A little push and you explode into illumination and power. I can transform the sorriest of God's sons into a glowing Word. But it needs your faith. May I live in you and work through you? Think what I can do with you, and what we can do together!

These are great mysteries. Listen for my voice with joyous expectancy. And think on these things.*

(*This material which is entitled "Nobly Conceived" is the last chapter in Picture Windows on the Christ by Charles C. Wise, Jr., Magian Press, Penn Laird, VA 22846.)

ADDENDUM: It has occurred to me that there is a truth which would somewhat reconcile the concepts of enlightenment through kundalini and enlightenment through Christian mysticism. Lightning does not, as is popularly supposed, strike down from heaven upon an unsuspecting and unprepared earth. A negative charge from the one meets a positive charge emanating from the other as the gap between the two is bridged. Lightning strikes upward as truly as it strikes downward. Both the Christian and the Yoga traditions are partly true; it is just that each myth has tended to ignore the element the other emphasizes. So God reaches down toward each of us, but gets through only where there is a thrust upward to meet His descending reach. This is the meaningful symbolism of Michelangelo's magnificent painting "The Creation of Adam" in the Sistine Chapel.

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JESUS, A COURSE IN MIRACLES, AND KUNDALINI

Gene Kieffer

According to Helen Schucman, the author of A Course in Miracles, Jesus dictated this material. Assuming, on historical, archeological, and scriptural grounds that Jesus would have been acquainted with kundalini and hence would have included kundalini in his teachings, the author compares and contrasts the content of A Course in Miracles with the concept of kundalini.

Faithful Christians who first come to know about A Course in Miracles must feel uncomfortable with the thought that Jesus-in-Spirit is not at all like the man of flesh-and-blood whom they know from reading the Bible. But the uneasy feeling is short-lived. There is something about the Course that persuades the mind to put away its skepticism for a while. This willingness to turn away from the irritation of doubt is explained by Judith R. Skutch:

The Course is predicated on two belief systems. One is real, and the other is false. The false belief system is one that the ego adheres to, that we are born into this world in physical bodies, in a world that is real but physical, and things happen to us. Sometimes we experience happiness; once in a while joy; very often depression and anxiety; certainly disease, and always death. That's the system of thought that the ego wants...The other belief system has God as our reality. We are created in God's image as spirit, not as the physical body. We are love and a property of love is light. We are eternal and cannot be hurt...When one puts it that way, who but an insane person would want to choose the ego?¹

Who indeed! To say that A Course in Miracles is catching on is to make an understatement. Anyone with an interest, but not already familiar with it, ought to take the opportunity to view a two-hour documentary video cassette, produced by the Foundation for Inner Peace, Tiberon, CA, entitled, "The Story of a Course in Miracles." It is a highly informative, inspirational presentation. After viewing this film, hardly anyone can doubt the sincerity and loving dedication of those who have been instrumental in furthering this newest of our ever-multiplying religions.

COMPARE THE OLD JESUS WITH THE NEW. At first glance the only discomfiting hint that it may stand on shaky ground enters the mind of a trusting Christian when it is learned who is responsible for the teachings. They were dictated by an entity identifying himself as Jesus. If only there was tangible proof that they are from the Blessed Lord, then no barrier would stand in the way of acceptance. But a nagging feeling, perhaps a remnant of childhood training, troubles

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the tranquil mind of a few. Could this entity simply be pulling somebody's leg? If one were to channel a book by "Albert Einstein," it would not be unreasonable to expect a few well-trained scientists to check it out before going to press, all the more so if he no longer believed in his General Theory of Relativity. But in the case of the Course, or any other spiritual teaching, what is there to check out? With all the New Age talk about uniting science and religion, nothing has really ever come of this project.

The least a Christian can do is to wonder whether the teachings of Jesus, as handed down in A Course in Miracles, conform to those he gave out 2000 years ago. This Perennial Wisdom, to use a popular term, should not differ all that much from millennium to millennium. Spiritual truth ought to persist forever. To those Christians who believe that Jesus was God, it is disturbing to think that His instructions might not remain consistent through the ages. Before deciding they might wish to compare some of the Lord's statements in the Bible with those in the Course. If they find serious incompatibility which might indicate that these statements were not made by the same man, it might be prudent to proceed with caution. To be sure, it can be argued that what was good for the soul a long time ago is not necessarily right for it now; or that the ancient teachings may have to be adapted to suit present conditions. After all, the brain is evolving. It cannot be the same as it was at the time of the Romans, when even slavery was considered right and proper. In either case, there are two requirements: First, that we thoroughly understand what it was that the ancients actually taught and secondly that we thoroughly understand what is best for us. As rational human beings, we have to be certain about the purpose for which we were created. This can be ascertained only by research, which is to say, by discovering the target of human evolution. Find, it you can, whether anything in the course compares with this particular passage in the Bible:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever and the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world.²

The same Mystery is alluded to in the Book of Revelation, where it says, "he that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith. To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it."³ Now one might object that the foregoing has little bearing on the matter, because it is too enigmatic. But that's the point. There is more to it than meets the eye. The teachings of Jesus, as with every other

Master, may be understood on more than one level. Some of his words were meant for the initiated only. Whether this is also true of the Course has yet to be determined. To know for sure, one experienced in teaching the Course would have to be consulted, and we have not done that. As for the Biblical quotations, an explanation will be offered later. St. Paul gives us a clue, however, when he says that the pure water that flowed out of the rock struck by Moses in the desert was spiritual. "And all did drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."⁴

DIFFICULT FOR MANY TO COMPREHEND. If there is no mention of the hidden manna in A Course in Miracles, one has to wonder why not? Had Jesus of New York (the channeling took place there) never come across the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth? He did, because he commented on the crucifixion, etc. It is said that to study the Course one needs no guru, but many of us would be hopelessly lost without the benefit of a qualified teacher. Here, for example, are two of its pronouncements that are difficult for the ordinary mind to comprehend:

Forgive the world and you will understand that everything that God created cannot have an end--and nothing that he did not create is real. In this one sentence is our course explained.

The opposite of love is fear. But what is all-encompassing can have no opposite. This course can therefore be summed up very simply in this way. Nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.⁵

To grasp the meaning of the foregoing is like trying to catch a swarm of gnats with boxing gloves on, difficult at best. While it is true that many of the esoteric teachings were written in "twilight language", that is, they have a hidden or double meaning, it is supposedly not the case here. But how do we "forgive the world?" Are we to forgive it for existing? More puzzling is the dictum that God did not create the material universe at all:

It is a result of splitting off of a part of the Divine Consciousness into an ego which separated from God. It's a kind of illusion. It is not the world of God as creator. God the Father doesn't even know about this material world. When we separated from God (the world of matter and form still had not come into existence) in order to escape from God's wrath, what we did is that we went out of our mind, as it were, and projected that thought of separation, and that projection then became the world so that the world is really seen as a large smoke screen, or hiding place, in which we seek to conceal ourselves so that God doesn't punish us.⁶

THE ACCEPTANCE OF "REALITY". Although that quotation is not taken verbatim from the Course, it does come from a qualified expert, Kenneth Wapnick, one of the principal spokesmen in the authorized video presentation. Better that we hear more about this recondite subject directly from the text, however. Drawing from Chapter VIII, on "The Acceptance of Reality", we read the following:

Fear of the Will of God is one of the strongest beliefs the human mind has ever made. It could not possibly have occurred unless the mind were already profoundly split, making it possible for it to be afraid of what it really is. Reality cannot "threaten" anything except illusions, since reality can only uphold truth. The very fact that the Will of God, which is what you are, is perceived as fearful, demonstrates that you are afraid of what you are. It is not the Will of God of which you are afraid, but yours.⁷

May we be forgiven if, in our feeble attempts to extricate ourselves from the morass, we turn back to the part that explains the "peace of god?" It implies that God did not create everything, or that, if He did create everything, it will never cease to exist. But in what form? As energy or as Spirit? Admittedly, deep study is required to fathom the mystery, and that, of course, is the reason for having a teacher's manual. But before consulting it, try this one: "Nothing He did not create is real." Unless we are mistaken, it says that whatever God created is real; what He did not create is unreal. If, because of previous training we think that He created everything and therefore everything is real, we would be mistaken: He did not. A Course in Miracles declares the God did not create the material universe:

It is a result of a splitting off of a part of the Divine Consciousness into an ego which separated from God. That it's a kind of illusion. It is not the work of God as Creator. The first article of the Christian creed--"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth, of all things visible and invisible" is denied! Because God is not that, and God the Father doesn't even know about this material world. The Course teaches that when we separated from God (the world of matter and form still had not come into existence), in order to escape from God's wrath, what we did is that we went out of our mind, as it were, and projected that thought of separation, and that projection then became the world, so that the world is really seen as a smoke screen, or hiding place, in which we seek to conceal ourselves so that God doesn't punish us.

It is useless to apply logic where logic does not apply. Frances Vaughn, the well-known psychologist and author, speaking on behalf of the Course on the promotional cassette-

te, says, "The Course is not about learning a new intellectual thought system. It's about experience. It says that a universal theology is impossible, but that a universal experience is not only possible but necessary."

Not to be picky, but isn't that what the Course is, a new theology? Granted, its particular brand of theology can never become universal, but this is not to say that a universal theology won't be developed eventually. In fact, it is absolutely necessary that the world comes to accept one theology, if for no other reason than to eliminate the creedal fanaticism that now threatens to blow it up. As for a "universal experience," the only one imaginable is a global catastrophe, whether it is brought on by nature or by man himself. The Course, however, is not a matter of black and white. Its sole appeal is made to the right side of the brain, for its hundred and one subtleties and nuances are meant to be understood by the heart alone. As for the statement about love being the opposite of fear, its meaning, too, is fuzzy. If the opposite of love is fear, and if there can be no opposites, then there can be neither fear nor love. But millions do live in fear of many things: an accidental nuclear war; an economic depression; AIDS; etc. Too simple? Okay, let's carry on. Say the following words aloud a few times and see whether repetition helps: "Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists."

People, places, and things can indeed be threatened. The planet is threatened. If it explodes in an H-Bomb exchange, only quarks will continue to exist. But who wants to be a quark? As for nothing unreal existing, the redundancy speaks for itself. There must be a twilight meaning known only to the initiated. The fact is that a great many highly intelligent and well-educated men and women are sold on the Course and testify over and over again that it has helped them to change their lives for the better. That the same thing can be said about every other religion and every self-help course, from Scientology and Science of Mind, is not to diminish its value. We simply would like to see open discussions on all such systems, with an aim towards finding the most effective elements in each.

"THEY WERE DICTATED, NOT WRITTEN." The best way to learn about the Course is to see the semi-documentary film on which most of this article is based. It opens in cloud-land; that is, the first images to appear on camera are billowy clouds, a sort of visual metaphor for what is to follow. Next on screen are moving shots of "the Books," like dark tombstones, as a woman's soft voice says, "They were dictated, not written. They are about love, about forgiveness and about inner peace. They contain a whole philosophy for living in our times. This is the story of how they came into being."

From the beginning, we are shown how, in less than a decade, a new religion has sprung up before our very eyes, its scriptures published in a dozen languages with more to come. The first person to make an appearance in the film is

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Prof. William Thetford, the Columbia University psychologist who, from the inception, was to be the channel's sole collaborator. "In 1958, I accepted an appointment as professor of medical psychology at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons," he says. "And one of my first duties was to hire a research psychologist for a special collaborative study program." This was to be Dr. Helen Schucman. The two worked closely together for the next seven years on a wide variety of academic, professional, clinical, and administrative projects. "For the most part, I think we worked quite effectively," Dr. Thetford comments, "but there was also a great deal of conflict and stress in our personal and professional relationships." He goes on to say that Helen had many psychic experiences:

In addition to her extraordinary dreams, she astonished me with detailed descriptions of places where I was staying on vacation, although she had never even seen them...As a research psychologist, Helen couldn't understand this flood of mental imagery, these various psychic experiences that she kept having, and it had a cumulative impact on her during the summer of 1965. She kept wondering, "Am I losing my mind? Am I going crazy? How can I reconcile this with my role as a scientist? So her conflict certainly increased enormously during that period.

HER PARANORMAL EXPERIENCES WERE EXTREMELY DISTRESSING TO HER. The film draws much detailed information from Dr. Schucman's unpublished autobiography. At one place she writes, "This psychic phase ended abruptly with a particularly clear picture episode in which I knew I had made an irrevocable choice." She began a series of letters to Dr. Thetford: "This morning I kept saying sort of without intention, 'I am a channel,' which seemed to mean something at the time. But the channel got clogged up. It's not open yet." At another time she says, "I'm not sure I want to write this, but I have an idea I'm obeying an order. These orders are rather stern, and the main feeling I get is that I wouldn't dare disobey them. This is the second one." Dr. Thetford makes an observation on her state of mind:

Helen prided herself as a research psychologist, not as someone who heard voices, who had heightened visual imagery, who experienced all these psychic events that occurred throughout the summer of '65. It was extremely distressing to her. She kept feeling that maybe she has losing her mind. Certainly she couldn't reconcile all of this activity with her scientific predilections. And this became a particularly acute problem for her as the summer and early fall began.

One night she called me--this was in October--and said, "You know, that inner voice refuses to go away. It keeps saying, 'This is a course in miracles, please take notes.' What shall I do? Suppose it's crazy. Suppose it doesn't

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make any sense. Suppose it's flipped." She was obviously going through a great deal of anguish and agony at that point. I said the only obvious thing, "Why don't you take down whatever it is. You can read it to me tomorrow morning in the office, and if it doesn't make any sense, nobody else will have to know about it."

The next morning Helen came in, and as she read that beautiful introduction to the text, which says, "Nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists, herein lies the peace of God," it was obvious that we were tuning into something that could hardly be regarded as crazy, no matter how unexpected it was.

Dr. Thetford recalls what happened on that very memorable occasion, that morning when Helen came to his office with some of the first material she had ever transcribed from the Source, i.e., the Jesus of New York:

She was in quite a state. She could hardly talk. Her voice was almost inaudible. And I kept saying to her, don't worry about what it says. Just read it to me, then we can look at it later. It doesn't matter. No one will have to know. We'll tear it up. We'll do whatever is necessary, but just read it to me. And it was very difficult for her to even do that. She would cough and sputter and almost have a seizure rather than being able to simply read the words calmly.... That extreme anxiety continued for a while, certainly during the early phases of the text, when we encountered something like the first 50 principles on miracles.

The following words were taken directly from the material, as published:

This is a "Course in Miracles." It is a required course. Only the time that you take it is voluntary. Free will does not mean that you can establish the curriculum. It means only that you can elect what you want to take at a given time. The course does not aim at teaching the meaning of love, for that is beyond what can be taught. It does aim, however, to removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence, which is your natural inheritance.

TO DRAW THE ATTENTION OF SCIENCE. It is of the utmost importance that science come to know what happens when someone becomes a channel. Anybody interested in the phenomenon of Revelation--that is what A Course in Miracles purports to be--must pause to wonder. What is the mechanism involved? Is it something that can be studied and perhaps be empirically verified? Was the inner voice heard by Dr. Schucman really that of Jesus? Who can say? Research on the phenomenon of channeling, now very widespread, and on Revelation, still extremely rare, is as important as anything science

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could embark upon at this time. In our opinion, the main purpose of A Course in Miracles lies in its potential to draw the attention of science to this kind of phenomena. Looking back from a vantage point of half century in the future, historians may come to agree that the benefits promised by such an investigation outweigh those in the super-conducting, super-collider, whose construction is soon to begin in Texas at a projected cost of \$5 to \$10 billion. There is a relationship between channeling and Revelation as yet unknown, and it has to be investigated.

Bill Moyers recently threw a flood of light on a corner of the question when he asked Peter Druker, on television, to tell him what he feared most at this juncture of history. Without hesitation, the consultant to the Pentagon, Japan, and numerous multi-national corporations, replied: "Charisma." This word, charisma, is defined in the dictionary as "a quality of extraordinary spiritual power attributed to a person or office capable of eliciting popular support in the direction of human affairs." Just as relevant, though different, was a question Dr. Thetford asked of Dr. Schucman early on in their channeling project. It concerned the identity of the Source. She answered in these words:

I did not understand the calm but impressive authority with which the Voice dictated. It is largely because of the strangely compelling nature of this authority that I have referred to the Voice with a capital "V". At several places in the writing the Voice itself speaks in no uncertain terms about the author. Jesus!

WHAT THE ANCIENT SAGES HAD TO SAY. Although we live in a law-bound universe, we know only the material laws, not the spiritual. If we are to ward off chaos, it is imperative that science take a careful look at what the ancient seers and sages had to say. Our New Age thinkers talk about the Perennial Philosophy, meaning Revelation, without really having a clear picture in their mind of what it means. Only a thorough scientific investigation can present a general reign of confusion and self-delusion. Dr. Thetford gives us a hint of this when he reports, "About halfway through the course, Helen came to me in an upset state, and this time she said she had really gone off the deep end. 'It's gibberish,' she said. 'It makes absolutely no sense, no meaning, nothing to it. It's absolutely impossible. I refuse to read it to you.'" He then proceeds to quote from the section that disturbed her so much. This is part of it:

Forgive us our illusions, Father, and help us to accept our true relationship with you in which there are no illusions and where none can ever enter. Our holiness is yours. What can there be in us that needs forgiveness when yours is perfect? The sleep of forgetfulness is only our willingness to accept your forgiveness and your love. Let us not wander into temptation, for the temptation of the Son of God is not your will.

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And let us receive only what you have given and accept but this into the minds you love. Amen.

TWO VERSIONS OF "THE LORD'S PRAYER." "At that point Helen burst into tears," he continues, "The beauty of the language, the profundity of the thought--in a sense the equivalence of the Lord's Prayer for the Course--seemed to be so clear that this was a statement very similar to the Lords' Prayer in many of its dimensions, and it made a very profound impact on Helen as well as, of course, on me." We know the Lord's prayer, from the Sermon on the Mount, but it may be of interest to recall the words, in order to illustrate how little, or how much depending upon the reader's particular frame of reference, Jesus changed his thinking over the years since he delivered the Sermon on the Mount:

Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

It is understandable that modern society, numbed by numberless threats to its very survival, should be on the lookout for new Messiahs. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." New Age people who have taken an interest in kundalini interpret these words, spoken by Jesus to Nicodemus, as a reference to the awakening of the Serpent Power, which is supposed to lead to a second birth. Inasmuch as nothing is known of Jesus' whereabouts between the ages of 12 and 30, he could have traveled to India or Egypt, as some clairvoyants speculate. Long before the birth of Christ, according to Joseph Campbell, kundalini was already a highly developed science in both of those countries. If the Lord had sought the company of like-minded men and women--the mystics--he would have had no difficulty in meeting and conversing with a number of adepts. It happens to a lesser extent even today. Jesus was both human and Divine. As a human being, he would have been in possession of a Kundalini, just like everyone else. But in him, the mechanism would have been fully awakened from birth. He said:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.⁸

MOSES WORKED MIRACLES WITH THE ROD OF AARON. Of all the Old Testament miracles, those performed by Moses and the Rod Aaron are the most remarkable. The plagues descend on Egypt when the Prophet stretches forth this wonder-working

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rod. With it he divides the Red Sea and smites the rock in the desert, causing pure water to gush forth abundantly. Chapter Seven of Exodus definitely connects miraculous power with Kundalini: And the Lord said to Moses, "When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a miracle, then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent." Pharaoh responds by calling up his wise men and sorcerers--the magicians of Egypt--and "they did the same with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they become serpents." But the Power working in Moses was great, "and Aaron's Rod swallowed up their rods."

As Campbell reminds us in The Inner Reaches of Outer Space, the priests of Sumeria and the Indus Valley, not to mention Egypt, China, and other ancient civilizations, were acquainted with the Serpent Power. This was not mere conjecture on his part. He provides overwhelming evidence to attest to the fact. Moses, therefore, could not have been kept in the dark about a spiritual science whose antiquity was enormous even in his time. For instance, there is an Egyptian text, on "vivifying the soul for ever," that was already very ancient when it was discovered at the time of Housap-ti, fifth king of the first dynasty. "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians."⁹ Had not God first spoken to him out of the bush that "burned with fire" but was not consumed? This could mean the human nervous system, nourished by an awakened kundalini, for it was shortly afterwards that he was chosen to lead the Children of Israel up out of the land of bondage.

"THE WISDOM OF GOD IN A MYSTERY." We mention this as a reminder that the knowledge of the Serpent Power was known in the time of Jesus, and that he must have been well schooled in it. St. Paul confirms this when he says, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect (initiated), yet not wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom of God ordained before the world unto our glory."¹⁰ The Greek word for wisdom is Sophia, and it has the same root and kabalistically the same number (780) as the Greek word Ophis or serpent. Likewise a clue to the meaning of the Old Testament story of the Brazen Serpent can be found in the fact that the word Messiah and the Hebrew word for serpent have the identical number value, 358. The Bible says, "The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died." (This could mean that they had succumbed to the temptations of their lower nature.) Then Moses was instructed to make the serpent of life, or brazen serpent, and elevate it on a pole. And it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived."¹¹

And just as Moses lifted high the serpent in the Desert so must the Son of Man be lifted up in

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order that every one who trusts in him may have the Life of Ages.¹²

In this teaching, the pole could symbolize the spinal cord--or Rod of Aaron--through which the sublimated Serpent Power (Ojas) is raised to the brain. If that's so, the obvious question that arises now is this, did the Jesus who dictated A Course in Miracles allude to kundalini anywhere in the text, as so frequently is the case in both the Old and New Testaments? In what other way can we understand the meaning of Biblical passages such as this:

Verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.¹³

According to the Yoga manuals, a dormant power-reservoir of psychic energy is located at the base of the spine. When this lowest of the chakras is awakened, there is a commingling of cosmic or universal prana (Spirit) with biological prana (life-energy). Although it is a superphysical substance like the mind, prana actually has a tangible organic medium by which it acts on living organisms through the nervous system. Jesus, the Christ, could be the "flesh and blood" of prana, the hidden manna or bread that came down from heaven. It could be Ojas. In the ancient esoteric texts, such as the Rig Veda, it is known as Soma, Ambrosia, or Amrita. The "stone upon which a new name will be written which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it," is the Philosopher's Stone of Alchemy, i.e., Kundalini.

"AN ANCIENT LEARNING PASSING AWAY." With any religion there are those who attempt to interpret the scriptures for others. So it is with A Course in Miracles. No one who has seen the video can question the love of those who have brought it to us. They are working tirelessly to further the teachings. There is concern that they have not spent sufficient time to compare them with those given by history's sages or seers and passed down over the centuries. We should not dismiss these priceless gems out of hand only to replace them with new, untested psychological theories. They may sound reasonable and good to the uninitiated, but time alone can be the judge.

The ancient sages knew the mind very well. Theirs was a real science handed down in an unbroken oral and written tradition from generation to generation. Just because we have made miraculous breakthroughs in science and technology over the past three centuries shouldn't mean that we must shun the knowledge they had labored for thousands of years

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to acquire. But A Course in Miracles presents a different point of view:

Let us be still an instant and forget all things we ever learned, all thoughts we have had and every preconception that we hold of what things mean and what their purpose is. Let us remember not our own ideas of what the world is for. We do not know. Let every image held by everyone be loosened from our minds and swept away. Be innocent of judgment, unaware of any thoughts of evil or of good that ever crossed your mind of anyone. Now do you know him not, but you are free to learn of him and learn of him anew. Now is he born again to you, and you are born again to him, without the past that sentenced him to die and you with him. Now is he free to live as you are free, because an ancient learning passed away and left a place for truth to be reborn.¹⁴

These words are strangely reminiscent of Descartes, who proposed to begin philosophy by doubting everything. Reminiscent, too, of Roger Bacon, of whom Will Durant said, "He demands an expurgation of the intellect as the first step in Renewal. We must, at the start, clear our minds, so far as we can, of all preconceptions, prejudices, assumptions, and theories...We must sweep out of our thought the "idols" or time-honored illusions and fallacies, born of our personal idiosyncracies of judgment or the traditional beliefs and dogmas of our group, we must banish all logical tricks of wishful thinking."¹⁵ Bacon and Descartes may have been right for their time. Today, however, we have the tools to test the validity of a particular philosophy, and theology, too. This should be a priority of all psychologists who would have their discipline become a science.

To return to A Course in Miracles, if one were to take every word of it literally--it runs to more than 600 pages--without benefit of interpretation by a thoughtful teacher, the ordinary person would become hopelessly confused. We have had a copy since 1975 and have read it carefully, trying to make it mesh with some of our favorite texts from ancient times, and we find an irreconcilable difference not only in language but also in the straight-forwardness of the language used. Take Ramayana, for example, Wherever the book is opened, there is practical advice, devoid of ambiguity:

Know my good friend, that it is the duty of good people to relieve the wretched from their distress; and those that do not look upon them with a compassionate eye are reckoned as the basest of men.

Know that it is avarice which is the cause of poverty and all dangers to mankind; just as the Karanja tree is the source of its bitter and pernicious fruits. All those men who rove about under the bondage of avarice have bid farewell to

their happiness by subjecting themselves to misery.

Know ignorance to be a false friend and deluder of the strongest minds; it is the baneful cause of endless woes and producer of the poisonous fruits of illusion.

The Divine Soul is of the essence of fire and never forsakes its igneous form. It inheres in all bodies without burning them, and it is the enlightener and purifier of all substances.¹⁶

These few paragraphs, selected at random, are sufficient to show that the rishis of old were, if nothing else, masters of clarity, the unmistakable mark of Enlightenment. There are thousands of them, some more profound than others, but all are unambiguous and require little or no interpretation in order to be instructive.

WITH THE GUIDANCE AND BLESSING OF JESUS. One of the key persons in disseminating the Course even before it was published was Kenneth Wapnick, a clinical psychologist who wrote his Ph.D. thesis on St. Theresa and schizophrenia. He says that he was sure from the beginning that Jesus was helping, and that whatever he and the others did "was really done with his guidance and his blessing:"

One of the things that I was most impressed with about the Course was the fact that Jesus was the author of it. I just could not believe that anybody else could have written it. It was very clear to me that Helen couldn't have written it, and I couldn't imagine it to have any other source than Jesus himself.¹⁷

Dr. Wapnick, who had considered joining a monastery in Israel before discovering A Course in Miracles, believes that it is compatible with the teachings found in the ancient scriptures of India known as the Upanishads. If it is, it is superficial at best. Even a cursory perusal of the Minor Upanishads, which delve deeply into the occult, is enough to convince any open-minded person that the rishies of old were light years ahead of us in their knowledge of the mind. Speaking of the soul or spirit, and Heaven, for instance, the 15th section of the Subala-Upanishad has this to say:

Oh, Lord, when this Vijnana-ghana goes out of the body, what does it burn and how? To which He replied: When it goes away, it burns prana, apana, vyana, samana, vairambha, mukhya, antaryama, prabhanjana...Then it burns prthivi, apas, tegas, vayu, and akas; then it burns the waking, the dreaming, the dreamless sleeping, and the fourth states as well as the maharlokas and worlds higher; then it burns the lokaloka...Then it burns dharma and adharama. Then it burns that which is

beyond, is sunless, limitless, and worldless. Then it burns akshara; it burns mrtyr; and mrytu becomes one with the great Lord. Beyond Him, there is neither Sat or asat, nor Sat-asat. This is the exposition of Nirvana, and thus is the exposition of the Vedas.

Meaningless? Not at all. In Samadhi, the Rishis were able to observe the subtlest of the life energies, those which Jesus referred to when he said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." These intelligent energies are so subtle that even an H-Bomb explosion would fail to elicit a twitter from them. In comparison, a Quark is like a boulder. At the rate modern psychology is progressing, it would take centuries before scholars acquire any knowledge of these living energies, unless scholars turn to the ancient scriptures for guidance. And this seems unlikely, considering their satisfaction with the status quo. It would take something drastic to jolt them out of their complacency. As the Ramayana says, "It is easy to destroy what is made by the hand, and to shut out the sensible objects from our perception, but who can disregard what is ascertained by the mind?"

SELF-MASTERY ESSENTIAL FOR TRUE CHANNELING. A friend of mine, who spent more than a quarter century researching psychics and paranormal phenomena, said that whenever he comes across anyone who believes he is a channel for a famous entity, he asks him what he would do if he got a phone call from the White House. "Wouldn't you check it out to make sure it really was the President and not somebody posing as him?" The Illuminated men and women of ancient times were well aware of the problem. That is the reason why long years were spent purifying the nervous system. They knew that unless the nerves or nadis and the brain were absolutely pure, the material coming through would be distorted, no matter how sublime or profound it might sound to the uncritical ear. Self-mastery and the perfection of character were essential before an aspirant even attempted to awaken Kundalini. Tobacco, hallucinogenic substances, narcotics, alcoholic beverages, inordinate sexual activity, dishonesty, etc. were all strictly proscribed, because they were sure poisons to a system intent on achieving Cosmic Consciousness. A small amount of any one of them would be sufficient to clog the brain with toxins, thus making it impossible to serve as a channel for higher knowledge.

Today, with the number of kundalini cases proliferating everywhere, "inner voices" are becoming a problem frequently met. Few if any of these individuals have spent the necessary time perfecting their character or purifying the nervous system. This failure precludes a rise to a higher state of consciousness. One must therefore be suspicious of all channeled material. It may, on very rare occasions, lead to winning small amounts of money in the state lottery or at the race tracks, or even in finding a modest treasure off the coast of Bimini. But never can it lead to anything remotely resembling genuine Revelation. Kundalini is the

fount of creativity; yes, but it can easily become erratic, neurotic, and psychotic.

"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." These words from the Bible say a lot, but what they do not say is that not everything purporting to come from Celestial realms is authentic. As many mischievous tricksters inhabit the unconscious mind as live in the physical world around us, if not more. Consciousness, the bedrock of the universe, holds infinite possibilities. The ancient adepts knew this better than we. Our knowledge of the brain is still only in its infancy.

THE WATER OF EVERLASTING LIFE. Replying to the woman of Samaria, at the well, Jesus said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." In the language of the adepts this is known as Urdhava-retas, the upward flow of the reproductive energy into the brain. It is the fuel that illuminates the mind and dispels all darkness. When it is flowing perennially, it produces a Spiritual Genius. Jesus of Nazareth was such a man. Whether the teachings contained in the Course are of such a spiritual quality remains to be seen. But how is one to know?

If a thousand ardent students of A Course in Miracles were to make a sustained effort to achieve illumination, that would be a test of the real efficacy of the teachings. Failure would not constitute a mark against the Course, but if anyone succeeded, it would be an indication that hidden manna resides therein. Such a sanction from heaven would also be proof positive that Jesus of New York was also a Spiritual Genius and that the channel through whom he transmitted his message had been Urdhava-retas. Let us hope for it. In the meantime, it should be our bounden duty to pursue religious truth on a scientific basis, for as Dr. M. Scott Peck has observed:

This beginning possibility of unification of religion and science is the most significant and exiting happening in our intellectual life today. But it is only just beginning. For the most part both the religious and the scientific remain in self-imposed narrow frames of reference, each still largely blinded by its own particular type of tunnel vision. Examine, for example, the behavior of both in regard to the question of miracles. Even the idea of a miracle is anathema to most scientists.

AN INTELLIGENT ENERGY WORKS THE MIRACLE. No greater miracle is possible than that of raising an ordinary person up to the stature of an intellectual genius and enlightened being. This involves a complete overhauling of the nervous

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system and the brain. We can understand that for a genuine paranormal healing to take place, an intelligent energy must work the miracle of repair. It is the same intelligent energy that in nine months takes a tiny egg and transforms it into a human being, complete with a brain composed of billions of cells. To be born again--to experience a second birth--one must enlist the help of this same intelligent energy. It is this energy that must undertake the help of this same intelligent energy. It is this energy that must undertake the task of inner transformation, for it cannot be done from the outside. A commonplace individual must be raised up, as from the dead, and literally transmuted into an intellectual prodigy with an illuminated brain. No ordinary brain can channel higher knowledge--Revelation--free of aberration and distortion. It has come to us at the most critical of times, when genuine spiritual knowledge, conforming to the ancient Wisdom, is urgently needed to guide the race.

To do that, it must become a tool that can strengthen our will, not take it away from us, as some critics of "A Course" would have it. Because without a strong will we can accomplish nothing, not even our own survival. Roberto Assagioli has wisely pressed this point in his writings, even to the extent of having devised exercises for strengthening the will:

Let us realize thoroughly the full meaning and immense value of the discovery of the will. In whatever way it happens, either spontaneously or through conscious action, in a crisis or in the quiet of inner recollection, it constitutes a most important and decisive event in our lives. The discovery of the will in oneself, and even more the realization that the self and the will are intimately connected, may come as a real revelation which can change, often radically, a man's self-awareness and his whole attitude toward himself, other people, and the world.¹⁸

One awakens Kundalini through concentration on the Divine, and this requires a commitment of the will. Before Campbell wrote about the world-wide existence of this arcane knowledge in terms long past, there was general indifference to it on the part of the academic world. But that is changing.

"BE YE WISE AS SERPENTS." Knowledge of Kundalini constitutes the "Wisdom of the Serpent," hence our Lord's advice to his disciples: "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Here the Master links the serpent with the dove: "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. Then straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him."¹⁹ All four Gospels relate the same story. Why this emphasis on the Holy Spirit descending as a

dove? Because the dove was a symbol of the feminine energy, the prana-shakti of the goddess Kundalini. Perhaps the most important words ever spoken by Christ had to do with this luminous power. "Let your light shine before men, that they see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," he said. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."²⁰

What law did the Lord have in mind? What other law could there be but the Law of Evolution? For all his Serpentine Wisdom, one wonders whether Jesus, if he were here now, would catch the attention of the MacArthur Foundation, so little are the ancient esoteric teachings valued today. As one of the world's foremost authorities on the philosophies of ancient India, Lilian Silburn spent a lifetime reaching into the penetralia of their knowledge. She concludes that it was kundalini--nothing more, nothing less:

Kundalini is the ultimate in human knowledge and power... [Its] awakening is, somehow, the awakening of the latent cosmic energy lying in every human being, for such an energy is the origin of all his power, all his strength, all the forms of life he may assume...Kundalini yoga, therefore, is the ultimate achievement on the path of energy, a higher path complete in itself.²¹

Whoever would set out on the "Hero's journey" joins an invisible caravan stretching back to a time even before Moses proclaimed the Law. The Egyptians affirmed that it is Kundalini that makes the invisible visible. By the grace of favorable heredity and conscientious preparation, the aspirant is led unerringly, step by step, to the teachings of an inner Master. This is true for those who adhere to any genuine metaphysical system of spiritual psychotherapy. The Holy Spirit, like the dove sent out from the Ark, brings with it tangible proof of a haven beyond the horizon. The Perennial Philosophy is in truth mankind's greatest asset, our only guarantee of survival. Continued evolution of the brain is fraught with extreme danger. The accelerated pace of modern life puts demands on it never encountered before. It could crack under the strain. Our overcrowded mental hospitals signal that a knock-out punch could come at any time. In this, the age of the high-tech mind, we have underestimated the strength of our enemy: our selves. Inasmuch as evolution is one of the supreme truths made known in our time, it should be our first responsibility to determine the target toward which it is intentionally proceeding. This may appear to be an impossible goal, but it is not.

When the ancient manuals on Kundalini are examined, the first thing that comes to notice are the disciplines to be practiced. They were developed to speed up the evolutionary processes imperceptibly at work in the brain. But if our

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environment and lifestyle are not in conformance with the demands of evolution, we invite a catastrophe of our own making. It would mean that the brain is being distorted under the strain, that we are becoming a society of intellectual giants and spiritual dwarfs. With unlimited destructive power in our hip pocket we seem to be tempted to walk where even angels fear to tread.

¹From a VHS Promotional Cassette, 1987. The Story of a Course in Miracles.

²John 6: 47-51

³Chapter 2: 17

⁴I Cor. 10: 4

⁵From the VHS Promotional Cassette

⁶Kenneth Wapnick, from the VHS promotional cassette

⁷A Course in Miracles

⁸John 3: 3-7

⁹Acts 7: 22

¹⁰I Cor. 2: 6,7

¹¹Num. 21: 8,9

¹²John 3: 14, 15

¹³John 4: 53-58

¹⁴A Course in Miracles

¹⁵Will Durant, The Age of Reason

¹⁶The Yoga-Vasishtha Maharamayana

¹⁷VHS Cassette of Course

¹⁸Robert Assgioli, The Act of Will

¹⁹John1:32

²⁰Matt. 5: 17-18

²¹Lilian Silburn . The Energy of the Depths.

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